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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

# THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIAN MISSIONS ON PARENTAL CONTROL OVER CHILDREN AMONG THE BIRA OF ZAIRE

BY

RAIJA TELLERVO WARKENTIN ©

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH IN PARTIAL
FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY

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The Influence of Christian Missions on Parental Control over Children Among the Bira of Zaire.

submitted by Raija Warkentin

in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

Regna Darnell
(Supervisor)

Judith T. Irvine

Harold Barclay

Date: 13 April 1987

# ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines the changing parent-child relationship under Christian influence among the Bira in modern Zaire. To understand the change, one must also understand the influences of colonialism in Zaire, since colonialism and mission enterprise were closely related to each other. Population centres, schools, hospitals, and churches were created by these agencies. When these influences were felt, the traditional beliefs, spatial arrangements between sexes, and clan villages began to disappear. Six localities were chosen for closer study in view of their different degrees of Western and Christian influences; these included three villages, two mission stations (Catholic and Protestant), and a large city.

Christianity has tried to abolish traditional Bira beliefs in ancestors and witchcraft; and has, instead, presented a Christian God. The former beliefs worked efficiently as social controls in Bira society. After abandoning these beliefs, Bira have tended to see God as benign and not enforcing social control. Therefore, adult Bira now lack efficient social controls.

Bira children grow with an agrarian world view, in which parents are seen as their creators and sustainers. Children have an obligation to obey their parents, run errands, and work hard for them. Both ideal and practice are well preserved in all localities despite modern changes.

The last duty of the parents to their children is traditionally to give them a spouse. Urban children more than rural wanted to choose

their spouse themselves. Although it still is the ideal of all the children to have parents pay the bridewealth, in practice urban parents do not have means, while rural parents are more likely to do so. There is some trouble with juveniles, depending on the locality. As the Bira children approach the adult world, the social controls become relaxed, in urban centres more than in villages.

Although Christianity has produced changes in the Bira world, there are not many differences because of denominational affiliation. Instead, the localities, as they represent different mixtures of rural and urban, were found to explain differences in most cases.

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I am thankful to my thesis committee for their guidance. I appreciate Dr. Judith Irvine, Brandeis University, for her constructive criticism as the external examiner. Dr. Jane Ross has served as the university external examiner. I received much stimulation for writing the dissertation from "The Ethnography of Childhood" International Workshop she organized in 1987. Dr. Anthony Fisher has led me to good source books, as did Dr. Harold Barclay, who also helped me with discussions of various parts of the dissertation. My supervisor, Dr. Regna Darnell, has always been ready to discuss, guide, and broaden my thinking, for which I will always be thankful to

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# CHAPTER ONE: THE INTRODUCTION

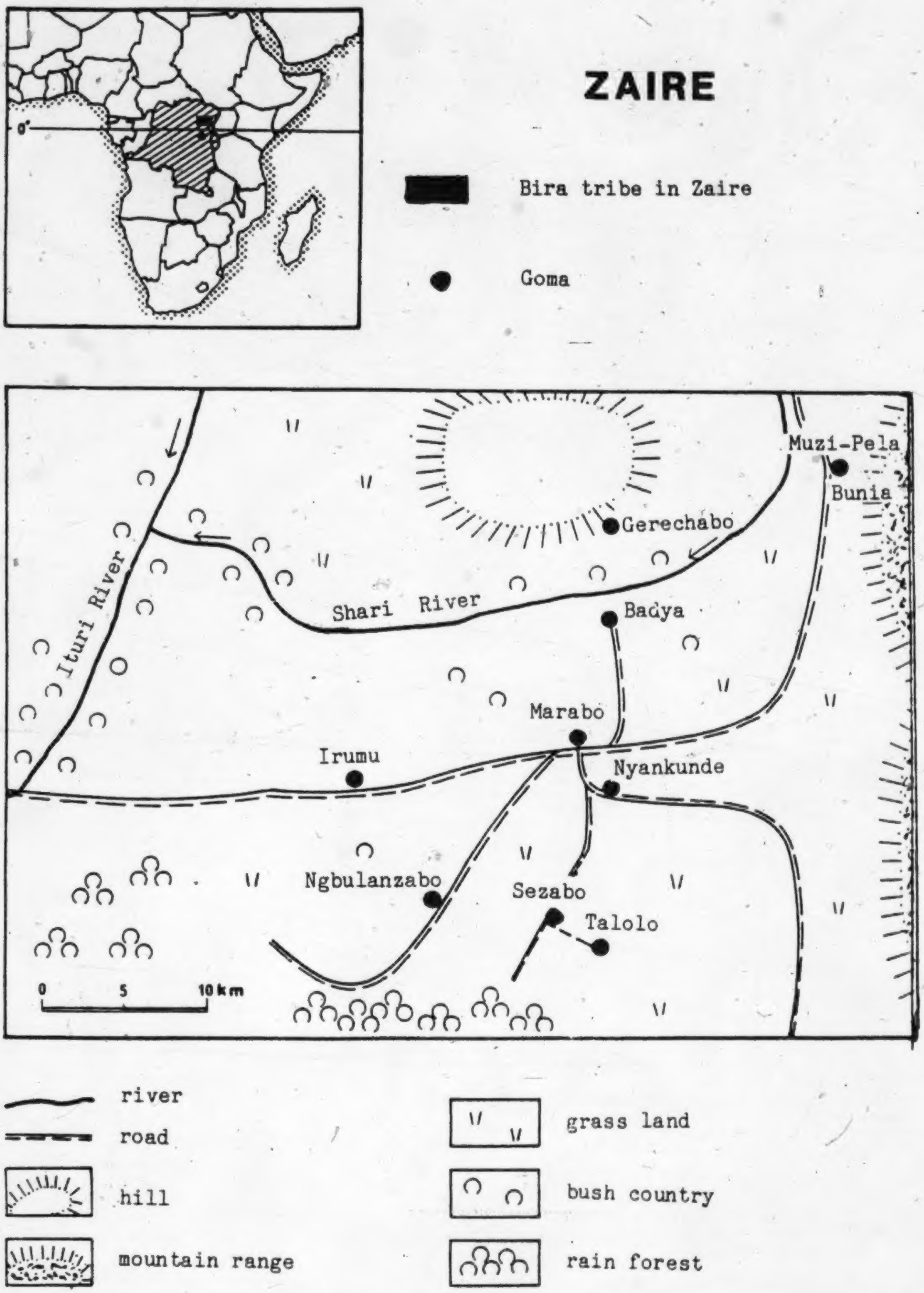
## The Bira

This study is concerned with the Bira who belong to a larger group of the Equatorial Bantu (Murdock 1959). The Bira area (Map 1) is situated in northeastern Zaire about 1° north of the equator at the altitude of 1,000 meters. Due to the proximity to the equator, day and night last about an equal amount of time in a day. The temperatures range between 18° and 28° C. The year is divided into two distinct seasons: the dry season from about November to March and the rainy season from April to October. The annual rainfall in this area is 127-150 centimeters (50"-60").

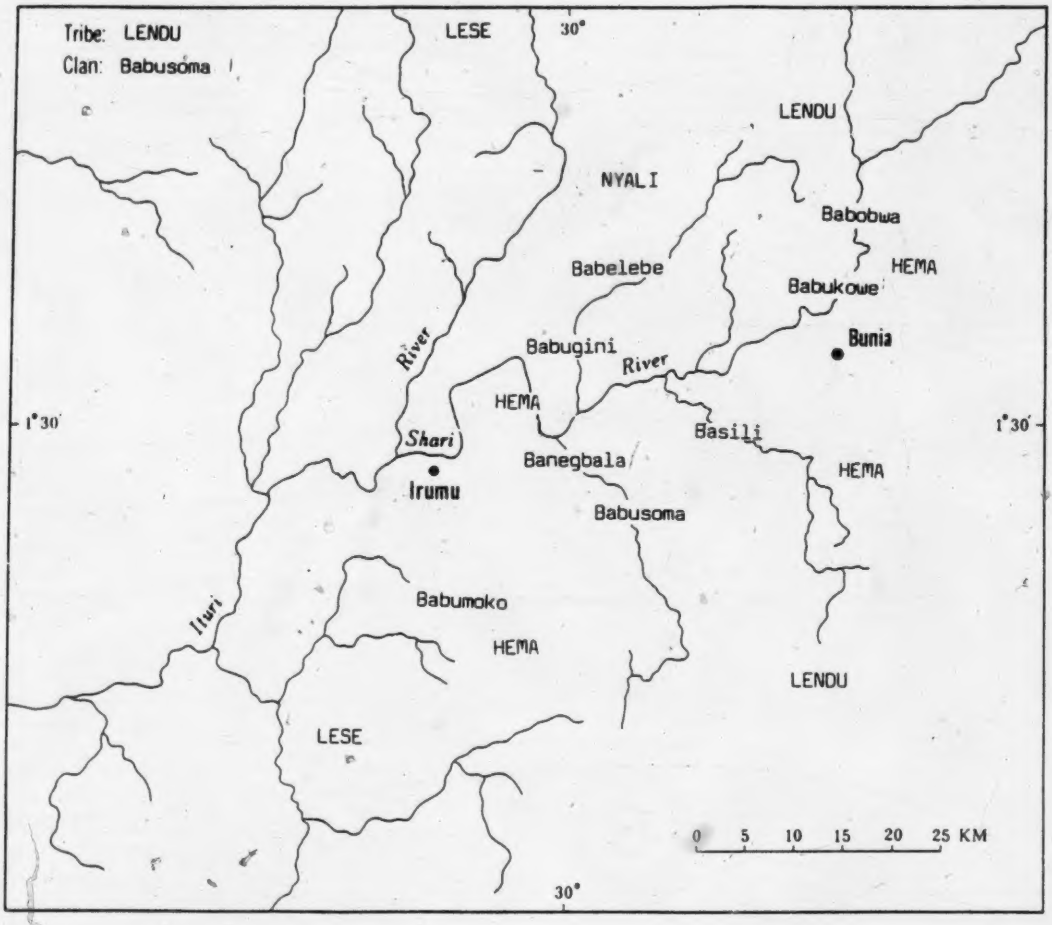
The Bira live in the savannah at the edge of the rain forest. They border on the tribes (Map 2) of the Nyali in the north and northwest and of the Lese in the west and south. In the northeast and east they touch the areas of the Lendu and Hema people. The homesteads of the pastoral Hema are also interspersed among the Bira. Some bands of the Bambuties or Pygmies come into touch with the Bira on the outskirts of the area in the south. The Bira speak Kibira, a Bantu language, but also know Swahili, which is the trade language in a large area of East Africa (more in the chapter of methods).

An old account of the population figures of the Bira is from the year 1917, when the Bira were estimated at 30,000 to 40,000, the latter estimate including the Bira working in mines out of their home areas (Laçomblez mentioned in Van Geluwe 1957). Since independence, no

Map 1. The research areas


0°
ZAIRE
Bira tribe in Zaire
Goma
Muzi-Pela
Bunia
Gerechabo
Ituri River
Shari River
Badya
Marabo
Irumu
Nyankunde
Ngbulanzabo
Sezabo
Talolo
0
5
10km
river
road
hill
mountain range
grass land
bush country
rain forest

Map 2: Bira clans and neighbouring tribes


Tribe: LENDU
Clan: Babusoma
LESE
30°
LENDU
NYALI
Babobwa
HEMA
Babelebe
Babukowe
Bunia
River
Babugini
River
HEMA
1°30
1°30
Shari
Basili
Irumu
Banegbala
HEMA
Babusoma
Ituri
Babumoko
HEMA
LENDU
LESE
0 5 10 15 20 25 KM
30°

census has been taken according to tribal affiliation, which is an attempt to make Zaireans feel part of a nation rather than their tribe. The present Bira population is hard to estimate, but it is probably between 100,000 and 120,000. This estimate is based on the fact that in 1975 the population was ca. 78,000 in localities almost exclusively Bira and in Bunia (Krzywicki 1985:5).

Local Bira communities are composed of segmentary lineages which form clans. Previously, each clan was said to have occupied one village but now a clan may be made up of several villages. Present villages may have three or four lineages. The lineages are patrilineal and the residence rule is patrilocal where sons settle down in their father's village. What has been said about the Equatorial Bantu in general is true for the Bira: "The men of a settlement thus form an integrated kin group as opposed to their wives, who are assembled from a number of other communities" (Murdock 1959: 282). Before the colonial intervention, the Bira had an acephalous political structure (See Bira History, Chapter Three).

The Bira are horticulturalists. They grow corn, beans, sweet potatoes, manioc, some dry-land rice, bananas, and some millet. Rural Bira women attend local and more distant markets to sell their excess garden products, in order to have money to buy sugar, salt, tea, palm oil, lamp oil, clothes etc. From the pastoral Hema with whom the Bira have been in contact over a hundred years, they have acquired the custom of raising cows, although not in such quantities as the Hema. Many of those Bira who do not have cows exchange their garden products for milk and butter from the Hema. Cows and goats have become the currency for bridewealth payments during this century. Bridewealth will be one of the major themes of this dissertation. With increasing urbanization and westernization, some Bira live without land or access to livelihood from land, and this has implications for bridewealth payments. Bira communities differ in degree of urbanization which is an ongoing process. This phenomenon will be addressed more fully in Chapter Five.

One of the research communities, namely Goma (Map 1), is situated outside the Bira area, circa 1° south of the equator in the altitude of 1500 meters above sea level. The dry and wet seasons are reversed compared to the Bira area north of the equator. Urban Bira are no longer horticulturalists but gain their livelihood in other ways. More information about Goma is given in Chapter Five.

## The Problem

When reading Sub-Saharan African ethnographies, it becomes very obvious that among the patrilineal societies obedience of children to their parents, especially to fathers, and to the wider circle of elders, is highly valued and often forcefully imposed. It is so among the Acholi, Bwamba, and Lugbara of Uganda (Apoko 1967, Winter 1956, Middleton 1965), the Dinka of the Sudan (Deng 1972), the Tallensi and some other tribes of West Africa (Fortes 1938, Kaye 1962, Grindal 1972), the Kikuyu and Gusii of Kenya (Kenyatta 1938, LeVine and LeVine 1963), South African tribes (Kidd 1906), the Chaga of Tanzania (Raum 1940), and among the Ngoni of Malawi (Read 1959). Only ethnographies of matrilineal societies (eg. Tonga of Zambia by Colson 1958, Anyi of

West Africa by Parin et al. 1980) conflict with this uniform picture, as they describe lesser obedience to parents.

Although Grindal (1972) on the Sisala of Northern Ghana is an exception, most ethnographies do not systematically examine systematically the relationship of obedience to the rest of the culture. Some ethnographies refer to the fact that the obedience of children to their parents extends ultimately to the ancestors (Kenyatta 1938:114; Middleton 1965:83-84; Grindal 1972:58); this fact is suggested by analytical writers as well (Hoernle 1931 and Malinowski 1936). Furthermore, Kenyatta (1938:114) makes a connection between the obedience of a son and the amount of inheritance he will secure; and between the obedience of a son or daughter and a speedy marriage. Middleton (1965:83-84) refers to the linkage of supernatural sickness to disobedience towards elders and the diseased. Raum (1940:285) and Grindal (1972:98) claim that western schooling makes children disobedient to their parents. Grindal (Ibid.:83, 104) adds the factors of Christianity and consequent weakening of family unity as forces influencing the diminishing power of parental control over children. Before Christianity, supernatural forces were believed to punish bad children and adults; but after the arrival of Christianity bad deeds were seen as going unpunished.

Obedience of children to their parents - and reciprocal parental control over children - is a traditional value in patrilineal Sub-Saharan African societies. However, there are indications in reports of modern Africa that new forces are undermining the traditional values. The main focus of the present research is whether childhood obedience maintains itself in the face of sociocultural change. The thesis explores obedience in relation to both ideological and socio-economic changes and tries to evaluate the degree of influence of each in undermining the traditional values. More specifically, this dissertation studies the influence of Christian missions on the obedience of Bira children of Northeastern Zaire. It will reconstruct the traditional pattern of the parent-child relationship and of marriage customs, and determine how this pattern has been altered as a consequence of both missionary influence and other western institutions. Changes from traditional culture have happened everywhere, even in the remotest villages. Therefore, this study tries to assess the changes in localities which have had different exposure to western institutions or mission influence. I have tried to separate the mission influence from secular western influence, although acknowledging that these two are often intertwined. Virtually all Bira are now Christian, either Catholic or Protestant; so there are no Bira with "pure" traditional religion. However, there are communities in which mission influence has been felt less directly, and others in which the influence has been dominant. The communities of this study with most mission influence were a Catholic mission station, Muzi-Pela, and a Protestant mission station, Nyankunde. Two villages, Sezabo and Gerechabo, and a large urban centre, Goma, were chosen as examples of communities without such direct missionary influence. A third village, Ngbulanzabo, had received a Bible school with a foreign missionary a few years ago. Beyond mission influence, these localities were affected to varying degrees by other western influences, such as availability of wage work opportunities, shops, medical care, and western education. In this respect, the localities could be put in order of the least to the most western influence: Sezabo, Ngbulanzabo, Gerechabo, Nyankunde, Muzi-Pela, and Goma.

The theoretical framework for addressing this complex problem has been drawn from several sources. Redfield's theoretical approach to Meso-American communities in terms of a folk-urban continuum provided an initial approach. The Bira research localities were placed in such a continuum and many results of this study were found related to the position of these communities in the continuum. Redfield's concept of moral order clarified the persistence of traditional Bira ideology; socioeconomic changes proved to be more closely tied to the rural-urban polarity.

Parent-child relationship in traditional societies is examined next. The "agrarian world-view" of parent-child relationship as outlined by LeVine and White (1986) is presented. Filial piety in the reciprocity of generations is the crux of this view, because it fits the social and economic arrangements of the agrarian world. Since the parents' duty in this system is to take care of the marital arrangements of their children, the changes influencing this custom today elsewhere in Africa will be examined.

Colonialism is the next theoretical dimension. It is important to perceive the enormous change which occurred in small scale societies, living on a subsistence economy, with the arrival of colonial powers. Colonialism has influenced a large portion of this globe, and its effects have been exposed to public scrutiny only largely after the colonial period. Colonialism hastened the disappearance of traditional isolated communities, as the influence of western institutions intruded into the most distant corners of this world. At the same time, urban centres were created in folk societies which had no previous urban or peasant institutions. Colonialism initiated extensive changes whose influences have been felt in family relationships.

A major aspect of colonialism has been the role of missionaries, who were often backed by the colonial administration. A large portion of the theoretical framework will depend on the literature of Christian missions. It will show that the missionaries' view of their message was different from the Bira perception of the new religion. The latter paid more attention to non-religious western characteristics, especially material wealth which went with it, than to the spiritual message it purported to carry. Magical attainment of Christian wealth has fascinated indigenous people all around the world more than rigorous following of the new doctrines. In this fascination, the supernatural sanctions of the old religion ceased to function; and the new Christians were left without adequate social controls.

We will then turn to the hypotheses of this study, and outline the chapters developing them.

## Folk-Urban Continuum and Moral Order

Classical writers have pointed out principal differences between traditional and more modern societies. Ferdinand Tonnies distinguished Gemeinschaft from Gesellschaft; Henry Maine distinguished the familistic society, based on status, from the contractual one; and Emile Durkheim distinguished mechanical solidarity, in which division of labor is based on sex and age, from organic solidarity, in which true division of labor exists. All these writers see a difference in the manner people relate to each other at the two extremes characterized. In Gemeinschaft societies, a moral order exists in which people are intimately familiar with each other; people know each other in many different social roles, so that a total person is involved in relation to other people; mutual exploitation is virtually impossible. Under the technical order which governs Gesellschaft relationships, in contrast, the focus is on the specific role a person is expected to fill as part of a specialization of tasks. Such a relationship does not involve the total person, and often leads to exploitation of persons.

Redfield (1952, 1962) built on the theories of these writers when he presented a model to explain Meso-American culture change. He postulated that the the basis for change is the amount of contact with urban centres, which can be measured by geographical distance. Although Bira culture change does not entirely diffuse from urban centres, the differential introduction of western institutions into different communities, regardless of their geographical relationship to one another, does produce a rural-urban continuum with many of the features described by Redfield.

According to Redfield, a folk community is small, isolated, homogenous, and preliterate. The members of the community feel group solidarity against outsiders, who are treated with suspicion and hostility. In a folk society, there are rarely any full time specialists. Status and role influence people in folk communities, and kinship groups provide the basic social categories for the population. There exists a shared understanding as to the ultimate nature and purpose of life. The fundamental order is a moral order, which includes the binding sentiments of rightness; and a sense that religious intensity and obligation strengthen people, and invisible beings embody goodness (Redfield 1953:21).

An urban community, at the other end of the continuum, is much larger in population. It is based on wealth accumulated in part by taxation. It is marked by literacy and monumental public works; development of such predictive and exact sciences as arithmetic, geometry, and astronomy; economic institutions, which make possible greatly expanded foreign trade; technical specialists; a ruling class; and a state organization (Ibid.:24).

Much of Redfield's work deals with peasant societies. According to him, it took much time in the course of history for a peasant society to develop from a tribal society. Peasants belong partly to a folk society, with their intimate intra-community relationships and less intimate relationships with outsiders, with their role and status categorization and kinship organization of social relationships, and finally with their moral order. However, peasants form a part-society because they are economically, politically, and administratively dependent on a city instead of being self-sufficient. With colonization, tribal people throughout the modern world are in the process of becoming peasants (Redfield 1962: 282-294). Bira are tribal people who have been influenced by Belgian colonialism since the beginning of the century. It is not, however, necessary for this study to decide to what degree they are peasants.

Redfield differentiates two religious modes: the "little" tradition and the "great" tradition. The former is a characteristic of the unlettered folk-society, including traditional beliefs and ideas of the "great" tradition. The latter is a characteristic of the academes of the urban society; and includes the ideas of "God", holy scripts, and religious specialists. This distinction is useful with the material of this study. The Bira have developed a "little" tradition out of a synthesis of traditional belief with the "great" tradition of Christianity. The indigenous tradition formed a tight moral code for the Bira according to which behavior was guided and disciplined, for children and adults alike. This study will examine how the "great" tradition has been combined with indigenous tradition to become the "little" tradition of the Bira, and what consequences the changes have had on the general morality of the people and particularly on obedience of children to their parents. Considerable disruption of traditional patterns among adults has happened; sometimes Zaireans have been able to develop new moral orders in the absence of traditional ones, such as urban neighborhood associations or close-knit church groups, similar to those in West Africa (Little (1957). As Redfield notes (1962:292), great religions have tried to bring new moral order to the midst of technical order. The Christian missions have tried in Zaire, especially at the mission stations. Nyankunde and Muzi-Pela are examples of it. Both stations are composed of people from different tribes and nationalities, a situation which makes the traditional moral order difficult to work. On the other hand, the attempts of the missions have not been understood as such by traditional peoples. Also, as Redfield points out, the message of the Christian church potentially conflicts with the moral order of the local people. In the following pages it will be shown that this happened among the Bira as well as in Mexico where Redfield centred his research.

Later researchers have criticized Redfield's model of the folk-urban continuum as inapplicable to rapidly changing tribal societies. Oscar Lewis (1951: 432-433) pointed out that urbanization is not the only agent of culture change; conquests have accomplished the same thing. Spindler (1977:58) claimed that many tribal societies in sub-Saharan Africa are beginning modernization toward an industrial level with never having experienced the agrarian peasant level. Bruner (1961) showed that in Sumatra the transition from rural to urban living did not change traditional ties; nor did it develop superficial, technical urban ties, as Redfield had predicted. In Yugoslavia, the Halperns (1972) demonstrated the reciprocal influence of the city on the rural village. Spindler (1977:67) calls this exchange "urbanization of the village" and a sort of "peasantization" of a city. Likewise, Spindler (Ibid: 66-69) showed that "urban" problems may arise in a "rural" area. In analyzing the changes

Spindler says, one must differentiate between industrialization, modernization, and urbanization, each of which may happen independently of the others (Ibid.). LeVine and White (1986:171) note the unevenness of the development experience in the Third World: in Latin America, urbanization runs ahead of industrial development; whereas in Africa mass education runs far ahead of urbanization.

Often the difference between Redfield and later writers is in the definition of the concept "urban". The later writers mentioned above often use this term for clusters of population as such. They do not take account of the fact that "urban" in Redfield's usage included, in addition, education, religion, and complex economic and administrative institutions. Whereas later writers have emphasized the different rate of change in these aspects of urbanization, Redfield saw change depending on the distance of a community from a city, an interpretation which is a little too simplistic. In the Bira case, ideological and socioeconomic changes have proceeded at different rates.

Despite the criticism, Redfield's model is useful for this study. As noted, later research has refined his theory by examining specific conditions of urbanization and has differentiated variables which Redfield placed under the umbrella term "urban". If the criterion in the folk-urban continuum is not geographical distance from an urban centre per se but other indices of urbanization, then the model can be applied. The Bira were a folk-society until Belgian colonialism was established in the area. The Belgian colonial administration founded centres, which grew to represent the urban way of life. Modern changes radiating from urban centres were felt everywhere, especially through the introduction of new local institutions, even in the distant villages. This study will show that it is not merely the distance from urban centres which is important but also different aspects of urbanization: schooling, the Christian church, Western health care, Western shops, plantations, and the like, which appear sporadically and in varying degrees in different rural communities. In Chapter Five, the research communities are placed on the folk-urban continuum. The reason for each assignment in the continuum and a description of each locality are given. The order of urbanization is established to see if the locality, an aspect of urbanization, is a determining factor for the kinds of answers received from school children and parents concerning the role of obedience in their relationship (see Chapter Two: Questionnaires and interviews). That is why associations between answers and locality (as compared to religion and sex) have been measured statistically. It is the main hypothesis of this dissertation that in the process of modernization, locality more than any other variable has influenced the change in the behavioral pattern between parents and children.

## Parent-Child Relationship and Marriage Customs

LeVine and White (1986) write about the moral order of "agrarian" societies, especially emphasizing the parent-child relationships. They analyze agrarian societies in terms of social linkages which offer support, motivation, and definition of the "good" life to their members. Such linkages maximize the connectedness of the individual to a community. This view is essentially the same as the Redfieldian concept of moral order in folk societies.

The writers say that agrarian peoples differ from the people of the urban-industrial world in how they see parenthood in relation to human potential. The relative autonomy of the family in producing what it consumes is the main feature of agrarian societies. LeVine and White's term "agrarian" corresponds to Redfield's term "folk" or "peasant". In these circumstances, child labor, directed by filial piety and based on natural fertility in which women continue giving birth until menopause, is adaptive. According to them, poor soil, unreliable rainfall, and shifting cultivation with hand-held hoe create an intense demand for routine labor in Sub-Saharan Africa, including that of young children. Agrarian parents generally expect children to obey their commands, to respect their status and parental responsibility in delegating tasks. Because the contribution of child labor is so important to the family economy, it is important for women to bear as many children as possible.

The agrarian concept of "virtue" is based on the idea of reciprocity: reciprocity between parents and children and between members of the kin group and the local group including both the dead and the living.

> "Parents are seen as nurturers and sponsors of their children, giving unilateral support and care for their young offspring for which they deserve a subsequent return. Child labor in this context, far from being exploitation, is the first installment

> of a child's reciprocation for what the parents have already given, namely, the gift of life and survival through infancy and early childhood... When the child marries, which usually involves feasts, gifts and ceremonies, the parents again provide crucial material and social support, for which later reciprocation may be expected... The most frequently expected return is material and social support from children in the parent's old age, though a proper burial (performed by children themselves) is another often mentioned in African societies" (LeVine and White 1986:33).

This reciprocity between parents and children is not necessarily completed within a single generation. There may be a temporary imbalance in what the children receive from parents; but once the former become parents, the imbalance should be corrected.

Reciprocity is extended to neighbors, kinfolk, and other members of the community. It may include help in house-building or harvesting, defense against attack, and participation in funerary rituals. Acquiring food and bridewealth payments also belong to the sphere of reciprocal obligations. This system provided benefits of individual security, interpersonal respect, and generational continuity. Security was both social and military, and was supported by an ideology of mutual responsibility. However, the writers suggest that military security was restricted, and colonial rule often brought unprecedented peace of mind to ordinary people who previously lived under constant threat of attack from other clans or tribes. They do not mention the less peaceful consequences of colonial rule (see the next section).

Respect was afforded to elders according to the traditional age-graded hierarchical system of agrarian societies, and was available to the majority of people as they moved through a full life-cycle. Continuity was centered in lineages which encompassed dead ancestors and future descendants.

LeVine and White go on to trace changes in parent-child relationship which were caused by the industrial revolution, the reduction of child mortality through medical advances, mass education, and increased public responsibility for children in the western world. The writers then give contrasting examples from Japan, China, and Third World countries, describing how an agrarian world view has been combined with western ideologies. Japan and China have had unique solutions to new influences. Also, Third World countries have combined agrarian and urban models in a variety of unique ways. Problems have arisen; and some have suffered, lost, or been sacrificed in the process. This study has focused not on the national level of acculturation but on the working out of LeVine and White's principles at a community level.

The Bira are one tribe in one Third World country who are trying to combine tradition with a new way. The data of this study is interpretable in terms of the agrarian world view model by LeVine and White. Reciprocity, filial piety, child labor, and natural fertility can all be found in Bira ideology. Binding sentiments were felt towards one's parents, members of one's lineage and clan, and were extended to ancestors. The morality of the local people was controlled by their ancestors. Witchcraft and magic were forces operating among people in close-knit communities. It will be seen on the following pages that agrarian world view can be carried from rural areas to urban ones, although the social circumstances are quite different in each locale. At all stages of acculturation, social linkages are weakened through westernization processes and by colonial and mission agencies. Although the Judaeo-Christian theological message stresses filial piety as an ideal (LeVine and White 1986), some modern missionary actions are contradictory to it. For example, Christians assert the right of the individual to choose his or her spouse, which contrasts with the old Bira (and the Jewish, on which Christianity is based) custom of parents' choosing. The Christian message conflicts with the lineage continuity of an agrarian society, because Christians are hostile to involvement with ancestors.

LeVine and White discuss the acculturation process on a national level without much attention to the individual or to different types of communities within each society. In this study, the acculturation process will be discussed on a community level, and much consideration given to individual examples. Sapir (1949:321), examining the relationship between culture and individual, noted that an individual is helpless without a cultural heritage to work with; but at the same time a healthy national culture implies the creative participation of most individuals in their community. This conclusion implies that not all individuals choose the same solutions, and culture need not be wholly shared. Embree (1950) showed that cultures vary in the extent that they allow alternative choices. He related this choice to the closeness or looseness of social integration.

Wallace (1952,1970) has shown that, in reality, instead of replication of cultural uniformity we find organization of diversity: personality traits of individuals form clusters rather than a uniform pattern. This latter pattern can show how Bira have adapted to change. Life histories of individuals show that persons make decisions, for instance, about where they live and where they move, according to the particular circumstances of their lives. Individual Bira life patterns fit with the life style of the community in which they are presently living.

Generally, marriage in Africa involves large kinship groups: the lineages of the groom and the bride are involved in marriage arrangements and prestations. This generalization is so although Africa is a vast continent and contains quite a variety of customs concerning marriage arrangements, as shown by Phillips' (1953) survey of marriage regulations. The literature cited here represents those societies which are similar either in social structure (patrilineal), subsistence activities, the use of cattle as bridewealth payments, or in problems of urbanization of traditional societies. Many East African societies (Kikuyu of Kenya, Ferraro 1976; Sebei of Uganda, Goldsmidt 1974; Ganda in Uganda, Southall 1960; Sonjo in Tanzania, Gray 1960) may be campared. Indeed, Bira relate as much to East Africa as to West Africa (Azande in Zaire, Evans-Pritchard 1934; Gonja, Tallensi, Sierra Leone, and generally West Africa, D'Hondt and Vandewiele 1980, Jahoda 1973, Little and Price 1973). Some literature on South Africa (Swaziland, Ferraro 1983; South Africa by Kuper 1982) may be used, although state societies (as that of Ganda in East Africa) are not comparable to the Bira area. The economic situation, e.g. monetary inflation, is not as catastrophic in South African societies, nor in the East African societies, as it has been in Zaire.

Among the Bira, the epitome of traditional childhood obedience occurred when parents chose a spouse for their child and directed his/her marital arrangements. However, present-day changes have had far reaching consequences for the fundamental basis of African family structure. Phillips (1953:4) points out that an important obstacle to an individual choosing a spouse in Africa was the prohibition against marrying a related person. Genealogy had to be carefully investigated by knowledgeable elders placing constraints on individual choice. Jahoda (1973) discussed the new and confusing freedom of choice for a spouse in West Africa. With the possibility of individual choice, the roles and emotional relationships between spouses change. A new notion of romantic love and companionship is emerging from western movies, novels, magazines, schools and colleges, and Christian teaching (Little and Price 1973, Jahoda 1973 for Sierra Leone, Gonja, and Tallensi).

Among the Kikuyu wage employment has reduced dependence on the lineage for marital arrangements. This situation has resulted in individual choice of spouses, marriage at a later age, and marital instability. As there are fewer lineage people involved in arranging marriages, there are also fewer people to see that the marriage lasts (Kikuyu Ferraro 1976; Swazi, Ferraro 1983). Similarly, a recent study of the Bambara of Mali (Grosz-Ngaté 1988) shows that the social unit involved in marriage arrangements is increasingly limited to the household rather than the wider kin group. This trend is found among the Bira, as will be seen.

A bridewealth transaction has been required in 82% of all traditional societies in Sub-Saharan Africa (Murdock 1967). The property transfer from groom's lineage to bride's lineage served as security for good treatment of the wife, as a form of compensation to the wife's lineage for the loss of a member, as a transference of genitorial rights over children, as a symbol of the union of two lineages, and as the transference of uxorial rights over women (Ferraro 1976, 1983). Of the bridewealth generally, the cows were regarded as payments for the children whom the wife would bear. Thus one can say, as the Southern Bantu did, that "cattle begets children" (Kuper 1982). Recent studies show the attitudes and actual state of affairs in modern tribal groups regarding adherence or non-adherence to bridewealth payments (d'Hondt and Vandewiele 1980, Ferraro 1983). Although the missions in many areas tried to stamp out the custom of bridewealth payments (Goldschmidt 1974; Kuper 1982; Ferraro 1976, 1983; Phillips 1953), the missions among the Bira did not. Although missionaries generally wished for marriages without the payments, continuation of the custom has been tolerated.

With western influence, a change in the currency of bridewealth payments from cattle to cash has occurred. In some cases, such as among the Southern Bantu, the unit of exchange has remained cattle, although cash equivalents have been accepted (Kuper 1982). However, the money has disadvantages which cattle do not: money inflates and is spent, while cattle reproduce. Kuper (1982) points out that a wife was ranked lower if the payments for her had been cash saved from labor migration. Traditionally, bridewealth payments had to be made in full before the consummation of the marriage. With a cash economy, the payments were made by installments and rarely completed (Ibid.:110). In Uganda, the monetization of bridewealth allowed parents to neglect their children's marriage arrangements (Southall 1960:212). Kassam (1969) suggests that it is possible that a greedy father might offer his daughter to the highest bidder. Among the Kikuyu, these fathers might then use the cash for investments. This produced a collapse of the traditional system. Sons had to be independent to get cash. This situation meant that there were fewer relatives interested in the stability of the marriage (Ferraro 1976). As Grosz-Ngaté (1988:508) states, money embodies different relationships and encodes different values than marriage gifts produced in the local subsistence economy. Marriage breakdown has increased in Africa (Evans-Pritchard 1934, Goldschmidt 1974, Gray 1960, Kuper 1982, Ferraro 1976). The Bira situation, especially in urban surroundings, shows they experience similar changes, which then destroy the old equilibrium of reciprocity in parent-child relationships. This theme will be developed in the thesis (see Chapter Eight).

## Colonialism and Modernization

Owusu (1979:22, 27) has criticized the anthropological research of the colonial period for concentrating on the static tribal past, while ignoring the changing nature of colonial society and practice. He stated:

> "Of course, now that the whole subject of Western colonialism is said to be a dead issue - the Portuguese presence in Africa notwithstanding - anthropologists, spurred on by a new, bolder, more humanistic and, no doubt, scientific professional ethic, are busy wiping the heavy dust off their buried and forgotten field notes to try to recapture part of the colonial experience for us! It does seem an interesting commentary on the sociology of knowledge that, in a post-colonial situation, anthropology should now be preoccupied with patterns of European imperialism and colonialism" (Owusu 1979:22).

Wolf (1982) has shown how distant parts of the globe came into contact with other parts during the course of European expansion and industrial revolution. He suggests that the process may have preceded expansion and industrial revolution. "Indeed, has there ever been a time when human populations have existed in independence of larger encompassing relationships, unaffected by larger fields of force?" (Ibid.:18). He combines globalism with particularism by showing that the situations in different continents and regions were different due to particular circumstances, especially the raw materials and work forces available in each environment. He sums up these two points of view:

> "We can no longer think of societies as isolated and self-maintaining systems. Nor can we imagine cultures as integrated totalities in which each part contributes to the maintenance of an organized, autonomous, and enduring whole. There are only cultural sets of practices and ideas, put into play by determinate human actors under determinate circumstances. In the course of action, these cultural sets are forever assembled, dismantled, and reassembled, conveying in variable accents the divergent paths of groups and classes." (Ibid.:390-391).

The global approach is particularized to Africa by Curtin (1964). He writes of the history of Africa as it was discovered by Europeans through exploration, exploitation, civilizing efforts, and missionization. His thesis is that "the image of Africa" was created in Europe to suit European needs, material or intellectual. This image, according to Curtin, sometimes touched the reality, as in the case of tropical medicine; but other times it was warped, as in the case of the idea of the absolute superiority of the western culture. Moreover, the latter view implied a moral obligation to change African culture, an idea which in turn gave the moral sanction for colonization. (A recent study of this issue is by Mudimbe 1988, who traces the "invention" of Africa in the works of a large number of African writers. This concept is not unique to Africa in its application. Most importantly, Said 1978 presents a similar view of the Orient: Orientalism was a concept created in Europe for European needs.)

Stanley (1890) is an example of the typical nineteenth century European's attitude toward Africa. He was sent to Africa to explore the continent and to support the existing foreign powers. He considered his mission noble. He saw himself as bringing law and order to Africa, which was in chaos because of slave traders. He saw the continent as yearning for civilization and the gospel, and he dreamed of participating in these changes.

Bodley (1982), in his book with the expressive title "Victims of Progress", analyzes the methods and influence of colonialism among colonized peoples around the world. He paints a gloomy picture. Powerful western cultures have assumed a natural right to exploit the world's resources wherever they find them regardless of the prior claims of indigenous populations. The colonizers elevated this right to the level of an ethical and legal principle, Bodley claims, which could justify the elimination of any cultures that were not making effective use of their resources (Ibid.:6).

Bodley says that, while conquering new areas by force, the western colonial powers were estimated to have caused c. 28 million deaths of indigenous people. Regardless of the kind of government the colonial powers set up, direct or indirect rule, the result was always a profound transformation of traditional tribal organization. Europeans acquired the best lands, and native peoples were pushed into unfertile peripheral areas. Native customs, from cannibalism to levirate, were condemned as immoral by colonial powers, a policy now called imperialism. Imperialism, together with the typically western agent of change, schooling, was a powerful weapon with which to undermine the self-esteem of indigenous populations. In 1966 the International Covenant of Human Rights, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly, stated that minority groups must not be denied their right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion, or to use their own language (Ibid.:108).

Bodley says that colonial powers forced indigenous people to work for them in extracting local resources. Taxes were imposed on the population, and there was no escape from them but to do forced labor or provide required amounts of cash or raw material. In the Congo Free State, a 1903 decree called for 40 hours of labor a month from each native in exchange for a token wage (Ibid.:128). During the first few decades of the colonial (then King Leopold's private) rule in the Congo, government officials were urged to obtain a maximum production of ivory and rubber as taxes; officials were reluctant to punish offences of murder and slavery by their own nationals; government troops and undisciplined private armies terrorized villagers into greater production. This oppression is said to have cost eight million lives in the Congo (Ibid.:34). Morel, who founded the Congo Reform Movement in England to fight the abusive system, set off an outcry in Europe with the publication of his reports on the atrocities. This outcry resulted in the annexation of the Free State by Belgium, which brought the establishment of "normal" forms of colonial administration.

Although the colonial powers claimed they occupied countries in the name of progress, Bodley argues that this notion was a disguise for exploitation of tribal populations. It was not a sharing of the benefits of progress with them. Colonial administrations, a money economy, and consumer philosophy were forced on tribal peoples who were then living in a subsistence economy with the idea of limited human needs. With persuasion, compulsion, and sometimes trickery (as among the Papuans, Ibid.:127) indigenous peoples were drawn into the world market economy. Their participation in this economy has resulted in the breakdown of the delicate balance of indigenous adaptations to environments.

Though the indigenous populations did not ask for progress, they paid the price for it. With European contact, they became the victims of widespread epidemics not having immunity to many European or Asian illnesses . Such epidemics occurred in the Bira area when the colonial administration was set up. In New Guinea, groups of indigenous people were moved to strange environments and forced to labor under conditions which caused them to suffer high mortality rates (Bodley 1982:127). Bodley (Ibid.:156) claims that the dietary changes linked to involvement in the market economy have lowered rather than raised the nutritional levels of the affected tribal peoples. Progress has resulted in deterioration of native teeth (Ibid: 156-159). The introduction of new technology also increased consumption of European goods, lowered mortality, and caused the eradication of traditional social controls. In some cases it replaced a relatively stable balance between population and natural resources with a new system that was inherently unbalanced. Bodley claims that economic development is destroying the environment of peoples who were once stewards of their resources (Ibid.:159). Among the Bira, population centres are suffering already from land shortage. Bira farmers in relatively isolated villages are becoming worried about the quality of the soil, because there is not enough land to let fields lie fallow long enough. Firewood and water are becoming scarce everywhere.

Keesing's (1976: 429-477) interpretation of colonialism is similar to Bodley's. He calls colonialism a racist denial of humanity (Ibid.:463). However, Keesing does not see colonialism as a clear contrast to the past of the indigenous societies. Like Wolf, Keesing says that small-scale societies have always been part of wider systems. Speaking of the Tiv, he writes: "Perhaps it is illusory to imagine that the Tiv ever controlled their own destiny: they have been part of wider systems, social, economic, and ecological, throughout their history. But in the colonial and postcolonial periods, their lives have been progressively pulled further from their own grasp." (Ibid.:439). Unlike Bodley, Keesing acknowledges a human capacity to adapt to oppression and adversity in the face of colonial subjugation; and finds it anthropologically challenging to examine the complexity of cultural integration and synthesis even under conditions of rapid culture change. He gives examples from different parts of the world (Caribbean, Melanesia, and the Pacific) which show that overt compliance to the demands of conquest may sometimes mask extreme conservatism (Ibid.:458). The Bira data show that their present acceptance of the Christian God is very much a mask for their traditional view of the Supreme Being.

Spindler (1977), like Keesing, points to examples in which modernization has not led to the destruction of traditional institutions. Selective adoption of modern traits has facilitated social changes consequent to modernization. This development has occurred in Japan, South Asia, Manus (as well as in some rural European communities in Germany, Spain and Yugoslavia which have not experienced colonization) (ibid.).

A common reaction to colonialism all around the world has been millenarian, messianic, or prophetic movements. The so-called "cargo cults" of New Guinea have become especially famous. Keesing sees these movements as steming from the western ethnocentric attitude which allowed Europeans treat indigenous peoples as inferior. "Proud men were turned into 'boys', led to despise the color of their skin and the ways of their forefathers" (Keesing 1976:463). Anticolonialist rage and frustration was expressed through these movements. Adherents rejected their traditional cultures, and formulated new social orders as a way to reach their millennium, a new world. The material power and prosperity of the Europeans were valued, and the traditional culture was viewed as an obstacle to reaching them. By following the doctrine of the cult and the leadership of its visionary leader in reorganizing social life, people expected to achieve a millennium. These movements were oriented toward a mystical millennium, the acquisition of European material goods and rejection of the religious symbols of the past. Many writers (e.g. Aberle 1962, cited in Keesing) have emphasized relative deprivation, a perceived gap between the desired and possible, between aspirations and abilities to satisfy them. Keesing, however, criticizes existing literature on millenarian movements because its concentration on the esoteric has obscured the continuity between millennial cults and more mundane political responses to colonial subjugation.

In Zaire, colonial regimes inspired millenarian and politically rebellious movements. One of the African separatist church movements, a counterpart to cargo cults, was started by Simon Kimbangu in the Lower Kongo area in the 1920s. The movement was an offshoot of a Baptist mission. Simon Kimbangu became the prophet for huge crowds of followers. To them he was a Black Christ, and the events of his life were viewed as comparable to Christ's. He was said to have performed healing miracles. The Belgian colonial government considered him a threat to its rule and imprisoned him. Kimbangu died in prison in 1951; but he is said to have appeared in different parts of Zaire, and his return is still expected by many people. Although his movement was banned for years, it has since 1959 received the status of one of the three official religions in independent Zaire: Catholic, Protestant, and Kimbanguist (Église de Jésus-Christ Sur la Terre Par Le Prophète Simon Kimbangu). The church is spreading steadily in the east. In Goma, there were several Kimbanguist churches. In the Bira area, there were a few new Kimbanguist churches; although very few Bira are involved with the movement.

Bira never rebelled against the colonial powers; but a neighboring tribe, the Lendu, revolted against forced labor (Malherbe 1976). In spite of the lack of a unified movement, the Bira expressed a mystical attitude toward European goods like that shown in millenarian movements. They said that they left their beliefs in ancestors and other spirits and now prayed fiercely to the White Man's God. However, God has left them empty-handed while Europeans owned so much. According to Bira thinking, Europeans have more powerful magic than they have, a situation which enables the former to have what seems to the Bira to be unlimited riches. To protect their rights to these goods, Europeans refuse to share their magic with the Black people. This topic will be discussed further in Chapter Six.

Urbanization was a result of colonial administration. Many indigenous people were drawn to urban centres. Two administration centres, Irumu and Bunia, were created in the Bira area. Within travelling distance, there were several mining centres and one fishing town. Gutkind (1975:98) has noted that urbanization without industrial and commercial development creates a vast gap between aspirations and mobility. He states:

> "While the govenments of the new nations aspire to build modern cities and towns, as showpieces of the nation, the bulk of the urban population - the unemployed, the poor, and those at the lowest economic levels - have little prospect of becoming participants in the benefits of the urban revolution which has gripped the underdeveloped countries." (Gutkind 1975:95).

Bunia is suffering from this state of affairs; and Bira immigrants in Goma, the most urban community of this study, experience it even more dramatically.

Colonialism did not end with the independence of the former colonies. Although nominally free, "Third World" countries continue to be dependent on investments of the "developed" countries; and with this economic dependence the latter have been able to manipulate the elite of the new countries. This situation is called neocolonialism. In many ways, the new "Third World" governments continue to treat their people the same as did the former colonial powers (Keesing 1976: 535-536, Alavi 1964, Nkrumah 1965). We will see some examples of this situation, as well as of the substantial changes caused by external colonial powers, in the chapter on Bira history.

## Christian Missions

Much has been written about the influence of Christian missionary activity on indigenous societies. In this dissertation, Chapters Four and Six discuss the history of Christian missions and consequent ideological changes among the Bira. Observations are remarkably similar throughout the Third World. Repeatedly, mission activity has gone hand in hand with colonial administration, these two agencies mostly supporting, occasionally opposing, each other. Missionaries, however, have been largely unaware of their influence on the native way of life (see Schapera 1958 for Tswana and Hutchinson 1957 for South Africa, Markowitz 1970 for Zaire, Beidelman 1974 for Kaguru of Tanzania).

Missionaries came to represent secular as well as spiritual aspects of Western rule (Malinowski 1936 and Markowitz 1970 for Africa, Hvalkof and Aaby 1981 for South America). The implicit assumption of the missionaries was that their western culture with its secular aspects was Christian while the native's culture was entirely "pagan". Malinowski (1936:490) wrote about a Native: "He lives in a world which is politically subject, economically dependent, culturally spoon-fed and moulded by another race and another civilization." Natives were taught to be ashamed of their own traditions. Malinowski claims that native church elders had a "benighted heathen complex" (Ibid:497). Natives rarely associated spirituality with conversion to Christianity, although missionaries thought they did. As Clifford (1982:76) put it, conversion, to a Melanesian, meant becoming actively involved in the White world. Beidelman (1974) stated that for Kaguru (in Tanzania) conversion was associated with gaining access to modern skills rather than with moral or spiritual commitment. Hutchinson (1957) claimed that the primary motive for conversion in South Africa was an economic one; through the missions, individuals could gain access to land and western goods. Hvalkof and Aaby (1981:173) cite a South American Indian saying, "No tobacco, no hallelujah", the explanation being that the man did not want to attend religious meetings any more, because there was no more tobacco being offered.

As stated in the discussion of millenarian movements, the material wealth of the missionaries seemed awesome to natives, although the former usually saw themselves as living modestly by western standards. The cargo cults of Melanesia are the most famous examples of this situation. Missionaries introduced monetary values to people who had had no former knowledge of market economy. Hvalkof and Aaby (1981) state for South America that it is a paradox for a spiritual organization to teach that everything can be measured and valued by money. Curtin (1964:269) emphasizes that although the goals of missions might have been spiritual, their means were consistently material. Beidelman (1974) evaluates this process by saying that missionaries instilled materialistic attitudes in natives but later criticized them for having such attitudes. Mazrui, in his film "New Gods" (1982), deals with the changes in Muslim Africa by making this eloquent statement: "The greatest threat to Islam is not Christianity but Western secularism. It is not the passion on the cross but the ecstasy of modernity, not the church of Christ but the altar of materialism." It could be added that not only Moslem Africa but also Christian Africa is experiencing the same threats: modernity, Western secularism, and materialism. The Bira are experiencing the same pressures, as shown in Chapter Six.

Missions operated in three realms: spiritual (which was the main focus in their minds, although not grasped as such by natives), by establishing churches; educational, by starting schools; and medical, by running dispensaries and hospitals. Reading and writing were taught along with specific western trade skills. These avenues of work operated on humanitarian principles, according to which the well-being of a total person was looked after. It is, again, paradoxical that the effects of these activities have resulted in secularizing the native outlook on life. For example, naturalistic explanation of illness as a consequence of germs or viruses is secular compared to native Toba (in Argentina) supernatural explanations of illness as a result of witchcraft and sorcery (Miller 1970:20). Chapter Six will discuss how the western view of illness differs from that of the Bira, who see illness as a possible result of social imbalance induced by witchcraft or infuriated ancestors (although they acknowledge the influence of "microbes" in some sicknesses). However, talking about witchcraft is taboo among church members, as I was repeatedly told. By education, the missions have created new occupations and elite groups who feel alienated from their tribal heritage and from the kinship group so essential to the traditional way of life (e.g. Nigeria by Ilogu 1979, South America by Hvalkof and Aaby 1981). Among the Bira, such elite groups are a minority; but, nevertheless, their alienation from tradition is real. Protestant church elders and Catholic religious personnel, catechists, sisters and brothers, belong to this emerging elite.

Horton (1964,1984) traces the process of European Christian attitudes in the history of European theology and sciences. In Medieval times, explanation, prediction, and control on one hand and communion with God on the other hand were intermingled. People were used to the idea that spiritual forces were to be tapped to improve man's lot on earth. By the 17th century, the two separated: sciences took over the explanation, prediction, and control functions, while religion retained the function of communion with God as an end in itself. Horton points out that traditional societies keep these different functions together until the missionaries impose the separation. The same process is observed by Miller (1970:21) who states that the missionary God is confined to a small arena of operation in contrast to the traditional (in this case, Toba) view of the involvement of spirits in everyday affairs. Redfield (1953:104) writes similarly about the "hardly separable interpenetration of man, nature, and God" in "precivilized" man's thinking. Similarly for the Bira, it is inconceivable that one's deeds can "separate" a person from God, as is taught by the Christian doctrine, because, in Bira thinking, human lives are inseparable from superhuman forces no matter what one does.

Horton (1984) also points out the difference between Christian and traditional thinking in many African populations: in the former, all spirits are subordinated to the one God, while, in the latter, lesser spiritual forces have a reality and life of their own. Although many African societies acknowledge a Supreme Being, a creator God, he often occupies only a peripheral position in the indigenous religious system; and he may not be thought as having an unambiguous association with the morally good, as does God in Judaeo-Christian thought. When man-spirit relationships are more highly developed with lesser spirits than with the Supreme Being, the attitudes of indigenous people towards the Christian God could be called apathetic (Horton 1984:411). P'Bitek (1970:62), a Ugandan scholar, goes so far as to claim that African traditions did not have a Supreme Being at all, but rather this concept was imposed by biased Christian investigators, who chose one, almost any one, of the traditional spirits and elevated it to the status of Supreme God. According to him, in the Acholi worldview, Africans learned to cope with all questions of importance without recourse to a God as a working hypothesis (Ibid.:100). It will be shown in Chapter Six that, although Bira are very willing to believe in a Creator God, their idea of God does not readily include the concept of God as morally good or a God who requires moral standards, as taught by the Christian missions.

In the same vein, the afterworld, which in Christian thought is presented as something better to look forward to, is incomprehensible to people raised in most folk traditions. In African thought, afterlife is more or less comparable to present life (Horton 1984:414); it is more compatible to Greek Hades than Christian heaven. P'Bitek (1970) opposes any relationship between the Greek and African traditions, as well as between the latter and Christianity. He states, "African religions are not so much concerned about the beginning and the end of the world, they are rather more concerned with the good life here and now, with health and prosperity, with success in life, happy and productive marriage etc.; they deal with the causes of diseases, with failures and other obstacles in the path of self realization and fulfilment" (Ibid.:62-63). The discussion of Bira thought will show that beliefs in an afterlife, heaven and hell, as presented by Christianity, do not capture Bira imagination.

African ethnographies define witchcraft as a common feature in interpersonal relationships, not only those involving illness. The geographically closest accounts about witchcraft to the Bira come from the Bwamba (Winter 1956, 1963), Lugbara (Middleton 1965), and Azande (Evans-Pritchard 1937). Witchcraft is a likely explanation for calamity, mishap, or death among the Bira as well. Witchcraft intentions are hidden. Like the Fipa in Tanzania (Willis 1985), Bira emphasize harmony and unity, sociability and non-violence. Conflict is well concealed, and, therefore, a person's polished and agreeable exterior may conceal unimaginable depths of depravity. While traditional Bira thought would easily find an explanation for bad luck in witchcraft, the Christian church refuses to deal with the subject at all, thus leaving interpersonal conflicts unresolved in Bira eyes.

In many African traditional societies, ancestors occupy an important position in the lives of the living. According to Tempels (1959), the main power of life in Luba (in Zaire) thinking is force. This power comes down from the Supreme Being to ancestors in descending hierarchical order; and among the living, greater amounts are trusted to the older than the younger. (Again, p'Bitek 1970 claims that this concept is dressing African religion in Christian clothing.) Tempels (1959) and Fortes (1959) have examined the relationship of ancestors to the living, and compared it to the relationship existing between God and a Christian. Ancestors are interested in moral lives of the living; but the latter may not always know when they have offended the ancestors, since such offences may come about in an unconscious way or perhaps through neglect by someone else in the lineage. There is no covenant between men and the ancestors or men and God as there is between a Christian and his God. According to Tempels, many Luba proverbs recall that God distributes his blessings and his woundings in accordance with his pleasure alone, not in accordance with human keeping or non-keeping of the covenant (Ibid.:99). Here the traditional view is more compatible with the archaic Greek view of Zeus than with the Christian view of God, whereby Zeus was seen as dispensing justice according to his will (Dodds 1963:29). This philosophical understanding explains why missionary emphasis on personal responsibility of a man to God for his deeds has not fallen on fertile ground among the Bira. Furthermore, the Bira understood morality in relation to ancestors, a concept which was not accepted by the Christian church. The opposing view was repeatedly expressed by missionaries, Catholic and Protestants alike.

General decline in morality in missionized communities has been noted by many writers. Promiscuity, unstable marriages, prostitution, blurring of sex roles, and schism between parents and children have been frequent results of changing circumstances (Africa: Bascom 1953 on Yoruba, Hutchinson 1957 on South Africa, Messenger 1959 on Anang, Vilakazi 1962 on Zulu, South America: Hvalkof and Aaby 1981). Malinowski (1936:498) notes the contempt of many educated Africans for their parents. He recommends that Christianity conserve the reverence for the father and mother which is the core of the ancestor worship rather than destroy it (Ibid.:513). Tshibalabala (1983/1984:15-16), a modern Zairean Catholic theologian, sees a need to uplift the ancestors to the company of God by stating that children should be taught that every moment of their lives is controlled by God and the ancestors. By returning to reverence for the ancestors, the society, in his opinion, might regain the moral standards which it lost when it abondoned traditional religious beliefs for a superficially-adapted Christianity. The Bira are not aware of such writings.

P'Bitek (1970:116) emphasizes the difference between Christian and African sexual morality. He claims that Pauline sex hatred became the core of the Christian sexual morality rather than Christ's more humane attitude to women. In African thinking, sex is good. According to Dodds (1963:139), in the course of Greek history, body and soul were set at odds; and this dichotomy eventually led to Puritanical thought. There is no notion of this opposition in African philosophical thought. In clan villages, Bira did not emphasize internal controls to follow sexual rules because the structural segregation of sexes did not give many opportunities to break the rules. The present Christian message does not give enough motivation for creating internal controls after disappearance of the traditional segregation of sexes.

## Hypotheses and Dissertation Outline

The hypotheses of this study involve all the areas discussed above, namely the folk-urban continuum of communtities, parent-child relationships as influenced by changes brought by colonialism and Christian missions. The early parent-child relationship is less influenced by foreign forces than the latter part of it. The adolescent-parent relationship is dependent on the location of the community in the folk-urban continuum.

Bira children grow up following the moral order of a folk community, wherein respect and filial piety in the reciprocity of generations are the cornerstones of the parent-child relationship. This is so regardless of the position of the communities in the folk-urban continuum. However, culture has changed as a result of missionization and colonization. The traditional social controls consisted of ancestors as guardians of the life of the living, and witchcraft to regulate the relationships between the living, with God in the periphery of the world view. Christianity has sought to abolish the role of the ancestors and of witchcraft. It elevates God as the sole moral source of the universe and of human life. Although the new Christian ideology is uniformly conceptualized among the Bira, it is inconsistent with both the traditional Bira and Christian understanding of morality. In the adult world, social controls do not work very well any more. Socio-economic difficulties add to the confusion of the situation, which is most stressful in the most urbanized communities and remains least stressful in the most traditional villages, although changes are happening everywhere.

The traditional system of parent-child relationship works during the childhood of the Bira. When approaching the adult world, Bira children may experience disappointments. The childhood experience sets up traditional expectations for the future, especially for a spouse from the parents; but these expectations do not always materialize. This is increasingly so towards the urban end of the continuum of communities, mainly because of financial difficulties of the parents. Part of the traditional reciprocity system is thus broken by westernized life style.

The argument outlined above is developed through eight chapters. The second chapter will address the research methods used to study the problem. To deal with the multiple sides of the research problem, a combination of methods was needed. Long-standing acquaintance with Bira families through participant observation has been the primary basis for research. In addition, specific research tools such as questionnaires for school children and interviews with parents have been used, as well as informal discussions of local circumstances and peculiarities with informants in each community.

The third chapter will present Bira history through its transformation from pre-colonial to colonial, and finally, as part of an independent Zaire. Bira have been shaken by outside forces without concern for their interests, either by foreigners or by other Congolese peoples. Drastic changes have happened in the subsistence economy and in the social structure of the communitites, with consequences of dissolving homogeneity and cooperation among people in local communities.

The fourth chapter focuses on the history of the Christian missions among the Bira: first the Catholic missions with the support of the Belgian government, and then the Protestant missions (in practice, the Plymouth Brethren) as private enterprises by Americans (a dichotomy which laid a basis for strained relationship between the two missions). Although Catholic and Protestant mission activities have been similar, concentrating on schools, church, and medicine, elements such as the church structures, style of services and of behavior have been different.

The fifth chapter identifies the six communities studied in a continuum from the most traditional to the least traditional, in this case the most urban. The first community has the most fully preserved lineage structure; the last has lost entirely this organization. The legal administration changes from traditional to western along this continuum. The use of Bira language, the accessibility of education, western medical services, and commercial outlets follow the continuum, as does the number of other African outsiders and foreigners living in the communities. Individual variation has been taken into account by giving life histories with maps of movements between localities. The communities are the independent variables, while the changes in customs and social relations are the dependent variables.

The sixth chapter will describe the ideological transformation of the Bira world as the tribe was missionized. While the moral order of the traditional society was ruled by the belief in ancestors and witchcraft, the Christianized Bira have been instructed to abandon these beliefs. The new concept of God, as understood by the Bira, lacks the underpinnings of social control, although the mission teaching tries to imply such control.

The seventh chapter deals with the agrarian parent-child relationship. Modern Bira children and parents in every location unanimously uphold traditional sentiments in which respect to parents, obedience, and participation in household work are essential for every child.

The eighth chapter delineates the confusing situation from adolescence to the time of marriage, when the conservative expectations of childhood are not met due to constraints which parents are no longer able to control. Spatial mixing of eligible young people in one locality and in churches (as opposed to the traditional segregation of eligible people to different clan villages) has reduced the need for parental choice of a spouse, especially in population centers. Increasing urban poverty with monetized economy, as opposed to rural economy with the backup of large fields, has reduced parental power to make bridewealth payments, and with it the right to arrange marriages and demand obedience in the children's marital affairs. With the disappearance of supernatural sanctions for morality, the new religion has failed to create new sanctions. The state of marital pairing is in confusion.

Finally in Chapter Nine, the difference in childhood and adolescence is examined. The parent-child relationship is compared to the God-child relationship because these two are often referred to as equivalent by the Bira. This study will propose an alternative explanation.

# CHAPTER TWO: RESEARCH METHODS

Because the theoretical foundation of this study is multi-faceted, no one method would have been adequate alone. Rather, several methods were needed to accomplish the theoretical goals of the study. Some of them are more appropriate to community-level generalization. Others are designed to elicit patterns of individual or family decision-making. It was the informal, participant observation methodology which drew together the macro- and micro-analytic approaches. The first section describes the efforts to build rapport between the Bira and the researcher in different localities, the informal collecting of information and difficulties encountered, areas of investigation, and the language used as a means of communication. The following section will introduce the key informants and the final section of this chapter will discuss the use of questionnaires and interview techniques in the research.

## Rapport Building and Participant Observation

This study is based on long term participant observation among the Bira. It began in 1974 when I first became acquainted with Ngbulanzabo and its people (Map 1). From 1974 to 1977, I visited the village regularly. During those years I occasionally visited several other Bira villages, including Sezabo and Gerechabo, which later became part of this study. From 1977 to 1981, while living in Goma, I had an opportunity to find Bira immigrants in the city and compare their lives there to those lived in the villages in Bira country. During those years, I went back to Ngbulanzabo to study particular aspects of village life in comparison to the life of the Bira immigrants. I was working for a personality study project interviewing mothers and doing specialized psychological tests among the adults and children. I completed my master's degree in general ethnology with a thesis on child rearing among rural and urban Bira (Child-Rearing and Socialization among the Bira in Village and Town, September 1980, University of Helsinki. It was published as part of a book Marriage, Pregnancy, and Early Childhood among the Bira of Zaire, 1985, Helsinki, Finnish Anthropological Association).

I lived at the Protestant mission station, Nyankunde, from 1974 to 1977, when my husband was a pilot for the missions and we were part of the foreign population there. While living in Goma (where my husband started a commercial air charter company) from 1977 to 1981, I kept contact with the mission station when visiting the village of Ngbulanzabo.

The Ngbulanzabo villagers initially expected me to be a nurse, a teacher, or a church worker, because these were the usual roles of white women visiting villages. However, I explained to them that I wanted to learn about their culture for university purposes. If they were surprised or puzzled, they did not show it. One family was more used to white people than the others and accepted me into their family, letting me participate in their household activities. For a couple of years, I did not write notes in the village. When I started doing so, some Bira concluded that I must make much money, for nobody worked so hard otherwise.

In Goma, I had a hard time finding the first Bira family. Once found, the fact that I had lived in the Bira area opened the doors to Bira households one after the other. The Bira circulated a story that my grandfather had been a Bira and that I truly was a Bira daughter ("Musika Mubira"). In moving from a Bira area to Goma meant that the Bira and I shared a similar past.

Having started with two communities, Ngbulanzabo and Goma, it was possible to expand the research to six communities during the year of research for this dissertation in 1985-1986. As to the Bira population, the network of women marrying out of their natal villages helped me to make friends in the two "new" rural villages where I now spent time. Although I had known the Protestant mission, my knowledge about the Catholic mission was vague. During the fieldwork from 1985 to 1986, I concentrated on getting to know the two Catholic stations of Badya and Muzi-Pela. I participated in mission activities together with the Zairean sisters with whom I lived at Muzi-Pela for several weeks on several occasions. I was able to talk informally with many Catholic and Protestant missionaries about their work and views of Zairean Christianity. During the year of fieldwork, I rotated my residence among the six communities, although my field base was at Nyankunde and family base in Goma.

When I went to other villages, word of mouth had already explained my role to the villagers. However, there were suspicions among some women, who were wondering if I had arrived in their village in search for a husband, since it was common that women went to visit their female relatives in a new village if their marriages had broken. Those who knew me gave them information about my marital status.

During the beginning of my stay in each village, I did census work. While doing it, I related better to some people than to others, and returned to those families several times until I felt that the time was right for a more detailed interview. At Nyankunde and Muzi-Pela, after being introduced to the first families, my circle of acquaintances grew naturally as they introduced me to their relatives. Sometimes strangers called to me when I was passing by and started chatting with me. Occasionally these encounters led to further visits. A few times it happened that the first exchange seemed open and friendly but later the people were not interested any more. If so, I did not pursue them any further. Consequently, I came to know some families better than others.

At Muzi-Pela, although I made acquaintances by other means, I also asked the chief to introduce me to some families whose children had had trouble with the law. This approach was clearly not the best. The families were frightened at the sight of the chief and feared some more legal trouble. It took several visits to gain a relaxed atmosphere for discussions and interviewing.

As a wife of a pilot, I received respect because a pilot was regarded as a miraculous and powerful man in control of western technology. In most locations I was called as "Madame Pilote" in spite of my attempts to be called by my name. As a mother of two children, I gained rapport, the respect of the Bira, and a spontaneous relationship in discussing topics of child rearing. In the past, the

Bira of Ngbulanzabo, Nyankunde, and Goma had followed the development of my children, who sometimes joined me in visits to Bira homes and who had playmates there. During the last year, my children were attending a boarding school further away in Zaire and were able to visit Bira homes only once or twice. However, Bira kept on asking about them every time we met. Although a mother, Bira tended to criticize me for not bearing more than two children and for being a neglectful wife to my husband for leaving him alone during long periods.

Being a white woman, I was often treated as a Bira man. I was directed to eat at a table with the host, instead of in the kitchen with women and children. At first I received protests if I went to chat with women in the kitchen, but when I asked to be allowed to do so and participated in food preparation or child care, I was permitted to stay there. At funerals, I was often offered a chair among the men instead of sitting on stools or on ground with women. (I noticed that Zairean Catholic sisters were treated the same way as I.) If I asked, I was allowed to attend men's meetings in villages. Therefore, as a white woman, I had, in fact, two statuses, which gave me access to both women's and men's worlds.

The areas of witchcraft and ancestor veneration were touchy subjects to discuss with Bira, because these practices had been forbidden since the arrival of the whites. However, some individuals with whom I had long-standing relationships were willing to discuss these subjects with, it seemed to me, openness. Women were less guarded about these topics than men, who had been in direct contact with White rules more often than women and also because I was a woman. I think I gained considerable insight into these matters, although I did not learn everything. Some censoring also occurred because of the fact that I was a Protestant and as such I was thought of as holding certain views, e.g. that Protestants do not drink alcoholic beverages. However, this censoring became less towards the end of the study. At Muzi-Pela, I was assumed to be a Catholic by most Bira, and I did not volunteer different information unless asked.

The language of communication in the field work was Swahili, which all Bira spoke. Although the tribal language of the Bira is Kibira, virtually all Bira are bilingual. Both Swahili and Kibira are Bantu languages, which are a group of the Benue-Congo branch of the Niger-Congo language family. The Bantu languages are spoken in a very large area from the West Atlantic to the southernmost tip of Africa. Swahili is the lingua franca in eastern Africa; it is spoken in Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, and Eastern Zaire. In Zaire, Swahili is widely used in schools, churches, market places, radio, and in communication between different tribes. Some children learn Swahili before coming to school, but others learn it only at that time. In urban areas, children know Swahili long before school. At school, Swahili is the first language, with an increasing amount of French year by year. In secondary school all teaching is in French. Most people, especially Bira women and children, did not know French. In Goma, and to some degree in Bunia, the first language among the Bira was Swahili due to mixed marriages. I learned some Kibira but not enough to eavesdrop or to conduct interviews. (There is no written material on Kibira available.) The questionnaires were also in Swahili.

In every location, services, prayer meetings, and special meetings for women and young people of both denominations were attended and recorded. Literature, including Christian journals, historic books, duplicated studies, etc., were read. Spontaneous sayings about God by Bira were recorded. Attitudes towards and remarks about witchcraft were noted. Funerals and weddings were attended. Work and leisure activities were participated in with people in each area. In sum, the fieldwork involved immersion in the life of Bira people as much as possible.

Chiefs of all locations except Goma were interviewed. The Baywana chief of a village grouping near Gerechabo, one of my research villages, permitted me to listen to court cases and showed me his records. This was not possible in any other location. At Sezabo, a group of elders who acted as advisors to the chief at Talolo made a special trip to visit me at Sezabo and answered questions about clan history and culture change. The school teachers and principals, as well as church leaders, were interviewed. I felt that the information received from these agents of culture change, with few exceptions, was heavily censored to suit their ideas of what white people like to or should hear. For example, teachers repeatedly insisted that they did not practice corporal punishment, but the questionaires of children and informal talking with students revealed that corporal punishment was common at school. (It was also observed once.) Chiefs claimed that they did not heed witchcraft accusations, because there is no scientific proof for witchcraft. However, various individuals and one chief pointed out that chiefs do deal with such accusations without official records. Pastors refused to talk about witchcraft, as if the whole subject belonged to the past. This attitude is a consequence of the colonial policy which tried to uproot native beliefs. (Such policy in the Lower Congo is described by Janzen, 1978). However, in informal prayer meetings, Bira church members sometimes told examples of witchcraft attempts against their lives. This shows that the issue is still meaningful to the Bira.

## Key Informants

In each location, there were a few individuals who came to be my ~~chief~~ or key informants on the local situation. In the villages, the longest-term friend and informant was a woman, E.C., who was at Ngbulanzabo, the mother of five children and in her early forties in 1986. This year is the baseline for all ages given unless otherwise stated. I have known her since 1974 and have stayed at her home during my visits to the village since 1979. She and her son paid a two week visit to our home in Bukavu during the Easter break in 1986. She is an outgoing and popular person. It was said that her produce was sold out first in any market because the customers liked to chat and buy from her. She had great organizing skills and was asked to be in charge of hospitality for large meetings, such as the chief had for his colleagues, or church meetings. She was unusually hospitable, permitting total strangers to stay overnight at her place. Therefore, Lese women would regularly crowd her living room for a stopover on their way to the market. She would accept children from far away areas to board with her during the school year. She had an ability to be at ease with everyone, and I found that she talked openly about anything or anybody with me, even about witchcraft, which men especially did not like to talk about.

Her husband, C.N., was an ambitious man, first at church work, then trying many businesses: growing food for the market, selling fish, making firewood and boards from the forest, and providing taxi service between population centres. He was also president of the cattle association of the village. He employed about a dozen workers and he was the first one in the village to own a vehicle. Their house was often filled with business associates, cattle people, workers or friends. He was a "primitive philospher" and had a profound understanding of Bira society which he generously shared with me during meal times. Through this family, I gained an insight in the conflict between a man's traditional aspirations for polygyny and the rules of the church on this matter. (This couple is discussed again in Chapter Five, "Individual Variation among People of the Communities".)

In the same village, there was another couple at whose home I stayed. They were Catholic; in fact, the husband, M.M. (now in his 60's) had been in charge of a chapel in another district before returning to his home village and divorcing his first wife. His present wife, K. N., (in her mid-40's) had raised two families and was still having children. They were more reserved people than the other couple; they lived in a more traditional section of the village and gave me information on other families living there. Their life was more conservative than that of the other couple. Some of the children of both couples married and had children during the years of our acquaintance. This provided me with an opportunity to follow closely the parental role in marital arrangements and the control of children after their marriages as well.

Although I have singled out two couples as key informants, I knew quite well 18 other families quite well whom I had been observing and interviewing over years. I recorded the life histories of the adults, memories from their childhood, their past marriages, their views about children, and followed the birth and growth, and sometimes the death, of their children. I often stopped to chat with the members of these families and learned a lot from each one of them.

At Sezabo, my primary informant was a Catholic woman, M.J., (in her late 30's) whom I knew well from Ngbulanzabo when she was married and living there. Several years ago she left her husband and lived with someone else at Sezabo before moving in with her present husband, S.S. (in his 40's). Although she was fairly new to the village, she was knowledgeable about it, because several wives at Sezabo were "sisters" from her home village and kept her informed. Her husband (in his 40's) had recently returned to the village from Mambasa (some 100 kilometers west of the area) where he had grown up; he tried several businesses (shop, bus-service, and gold trade) but, in the end, failed. During the year of research he was chosen as a lineage chief at Sezabo, in spite of his long absence from the village. His father (in his 70's) had been one of the first Protestants in the village and had been sent by the Plymouth Brethren mission to Mambasa to establish new churches. After the marriage break-up, he had been sent back to his home village where, against his wishes, he was not allowed to continue preaching, because his marital state was not in order and because he was said to have sometimes preached while inebriated.

Another informant at Sezabo was the S.S.'s cousin, T.M. (in his 40's), also a Protestant. He was being trained by "Sante communautaire"-project of Nyankunde to be the village nurse and as such respected (and talked about as a "doctor"). He had divorced 14 years previously, and lived alone since then, but during the research year he remarried. I knew his fiancee D.J. (in her late 20's) from Badya, the Catholic mission station, where she had been a teacher and had introduced me to the local mission. She was Catholic and had no intention of being converted to her husband's religion, although the latter expected it. She had been educated in a secondary school and been a teacher in several schools, among others at Muzi-Pela, the large Catholic mission station north of Bunia. Yet she married a man who lived in the most traditional village in my research. She felt herself to be different from other women in the village who had not seen as much of the outside world. She told me that she could not force herself to carry garden products for sale in the local markets. Her older sister, who had been married and living in the same village for a decade, was a help to her in adjustment to the village life. Because she had been in contact with Europeans, she understood my reasearch goals better than others. She was very helpful in explaining

Bira life to a foreigner. Although she was educated in western (Catholic) schools, she had an appreciation of tradition. For instance, their wedding (which I attended) was traditional instead of a church wedding. Her daughter from her former union became ill and died during my stay in their home. This brought about tensions and witchcraft suspicions between husband's and wife's kin-group. Through these two couples, I gained insight into many tensions existing in families affected by the process of Christianization and westernization.

In the third village, my major informant, Y.K., was a relative of a man who was formerly a mechanic for my husband's airplanes. I had met him briefly in 1976 and came to know him and his family better during the last year of research. He was a Protestant pastor (in his 60's) of a small village chapel and was forced to leave his position during the research year for undisclosed reasons. In the past, he had been sent by the mission to different villages in the Bira and Hema areas, but he had lived longest in Gerechabo, which was his clan area although not his lineage home. He had been an enthusiastic church leader since his youth and was very disappointed about the forced retirement. However, he built himself a house with the help of some church members in the same village and planned to continue living there. He had not lived traditionally, as he pointed out to me, in that he had stayed with one wife, although she had produced only daughters, at great intervals. His wife, B.S. (in her 50's) did not feel as comfortable with Swahili as with Kibira. She remembered Bira traditions well and would tell me about them. Although the husband claimed at first that he did not remember traditions, during long evenings of chatting, he talked about them. In his position, he had undermined them. The couple's grandchildren and other relatives were having some problems in marital arrangements and marriages, which gave me insight in parental attitudes and actions in such situations.

At Nyankunde, the Protestant mission station, there were only five Bira families; the rest of the church members lived outside the mission boundary. Two people living at the station became my informants. One was a divorced woman, P.S., (in her 40's) who lived with her widowed mother and her brother's family in a house built by the mission. Her father had been a prominent early leader of the church and had died ten years previously. This informant had had an unhappy marriage to a Catholic government official in Bunia, and had returned to her father's community. She was working for a missionary family as a cook and belonged to a singing group in the church. She had several brothers living nearby, some of whom were active in the church, while others had turned their backs on church activities. She was trying to buy herself a lot in her lineage area but was having difficulty. Through her I came to understand conflicts between traditional and Christian world views (when the family was divided on the matter) and conflict between traditional land rights and the western concept of land purchase, a situation in which the chief is caught between the two concepts. Although I felt that several members of her family censored their comments, she was more open and willing to expose even touchy issues.

Another informant was a Protestant man, J.B., (in his 40's) who had been working for the mission printing press since his youth. He was from a distant Bira area and had come to the station for school. His wife, E.S., worked fields and sold manioc cakes at the market. She introduced me to her kin group, who were indigenous to the area. Both husband and wife were very friendly to me and we spent hours talking either at my or their place. Through them and their children I learned about concerns of child rearing in a centre with many temptations and difficulties of mixed tribal groups attending the same mission church.

At Muzi-Pela, a Catholic sister, S.A., (in her 50's), a member of the Lendu tribe, acted as my first informant. As the hostess of the convent, she made it her task to introduce me to the local chiefs, missionaries, school personnel, and a few Bira families. She also told me about important events of the past at the station and keeps me up to date even now in letters. The sisters were very outgoing and spontaneous people who had friendly relations to the population. Through observation in their convent, I learned to understand how they had adopted Christianity and came to realize how they were different from lay Christians among the surrounding population.

Also at Muzi-Pela, I was priviledged to have as my informant an old Bira man, A.M., (in his late 70's) who was a lineage member of one of my Sezabo female informants, D.J.. He had left his home village as a boy to go to school and had worked as a houseboy for the first bishop in the area. He remembered the early days of the mission, when much of the time of Catholic priests was spent on trips through the bush. He was awarded a brick house by the mission for long service where he now lived with several of his daughters and their children.

It was hard for A.M. to see his daughters staying at home and producing children, although the custom was to leave home after bridewealth payments and live with the husbands. His place was near the centre of the mission, so I saw him almost daily on my way to visit other people. As he spent his days sitting in his chair watching the people passing by, he had time to chat with me. Everyone knew him and stopped to greet him, so through him I came to know others. Often he had younger men around, so they would ponder together about the changing times. He was an ardent Catholic and had attended mass and prayers regularly until recently when his strength, though not his mind, was failing. He would make quite shocking statements (for a faithful Catholic) like: "Church is bad because men and women meet each other". He often told me about Bira society before the Europeans came and compared it to modern times. He lamented the fact that he could not control his daughters' marriages. I was told that he died a few months after I left.

In Goma, I knew 20 Bira families in 1977, although by 1985 several adults and children had died or moved away. As at Ngbulanzabo, I had recorded the details of these families' lives carefully over the years. However, three persons became my key informants. One of them was a Bira man, J.M., (in his 40's) who was a secretary for Catholic school office. Because of his literary skills, Bira relied on him. He was a trusted person among them. He was very keen on knowing traditional Bira life in villages through literature, because he had not been able to travel back to the Bira country since immigrating to Goma. I was able to give him two books on the Bira (van Geluwe 1956, Constance-Marie 1947) which he studied thoroughly. He knows the Bira families in Goma and has kept me informed of Bira news with long letters during my absences from Zaire. I found him very helpful but sometimes I felt that the information was tailored to suit European ears.

An elderly Catholic woman, M.N. (in her 60's) was my second informant in Goma. Because she was one of the oldest in the Bira community, she felt responsible for the younger ones. She kept in contact with everyone and helped each one in trouble, often by taking care of their children. She attended every Bira gathering with great enthusiasm. Her personal life was a tragedy. Most of her children died young. Two sons grew to adulthood but became bandits and lived in prison (with occasional break-outs). The younger son was shot by military police. She cooked food daily for her living son in prison. She invited me to Bira festivities and carried on traditional rituals (especially mortuary) without embarrassment (which men often showed near a white person).

The third informant in Goma, K.M., was a personal friend and the mother (in her 30's) of five children. She actually belonged to the Nandi tribe but had had a Bira stepfather and was now married to a Bira. She was a person who spoke her mind. That gave me a sense of security because I could trust her to tell me if I was imposing on her. (Bira tended to be too polite to express negative feelings, at least to a white lady.) For example, she would tell me to go away when she did not want me around. But I knew that she would give me full attention another time, more suitable for her. In her outspoken manner, she would polarize European and native ways. I observed her difficulties in urban living, her struggle in gaining livelihood for a large family after her husband moved away, took another wife, and forgot to send any money to the first wife who stayed behind to wait for her children to finish their school year. I became a go-between for her and her husband, who worked in Bunia, because I travelled between these cities. She had visited her husband in Bunia and did not like the place. However she was planning to move there eventually.

The last key informant was a Catholic woman, M.C., (in her 30's) whom I knew from Goma (in 1978), Sezabo (her lineage was there) and from Nyankunde commercial centre (1984-1986). Born in Sezabo, she had lived in numerous locations in Zaire (and also in one in Uganda) after she had left the husband of her teens. Because she had no children and refused to settle down with a man who would bring bridewealth to her lineage men, she was ostracized by the latter. She claimed that her paternal uncles were constantly trying to kill her by witchcraft. Probably because of her marginal position, she thrived on telling me matters about others and herself that other Bira would have tried to hide from a white person. She was sick several times because, according to her own explanation, ancestors possessed her. She was struck by a bolt of lightning in bed due to witchcraft. She had been accused of killing a man with poison when she ran a restaurant. She was often threatened by wives of her lovers. She was a colorful person and led a dangerous life, which she enjoyed telling me about. Some of the stories I took with a grain of salt.

When looking at the group of the 17 informants, one notices that they represent different personalities, occupations, ages, sexes, statuses, degrees of acculturation, and life styles. Together they gave me a multidimensional picture of the contemporary Bira.

## Questionnaires and Interviews

During participant observation over the years, especially during the last year, my ideas about Bira understanding of Christianity, about their system of social control, and about their attitudes toward children and their education emerged. There were substantial differences between the communities in some matters, while in other matters there seemed to be unanimity. To formalize these impressions and to show the direction of change, I decided to do formal interviewing among parents and hand out questionnaires to school children. This I did during the last trimester of the research period. The questions emerged from observations and informal talks with informants ( See Appendices).

The questionnaire for school children raised a number of difficulties. The children were not used to such a procedure. However, it was an opportunity to collect a large number of children's views in a short time. Interviewing the same number of children individually would have been impossible, not only because of the time involved, but also because of the rule of respect which the children were expected to show to adults, which was expressed by being quiet when adults were present. I had been able to chat with the children of my major informants, and they had been freer to talk to an adult, but most Bira children followed the rule of respect by being quiet. Although the children had not had examinations at school like my questionnaires, at least they were used to answering questions. There is also a problem of validity in this kind of context. The students tended to express the ideal rather than the real. However, the questionnaires were not used alone but were concurrent with observations done in homes. My ethnographic experience confirmed the ideas expressed in questionnaires. Also, when clarifications of answers (see next paragraph) were asked for, longer oral discussions with some students gave insight into their way of thinking.

I prepared the questionnaire in Bukavu, a large city, where I was staying over the Easter holiday, and tested the questionnaire at a school there. The students, mostly from the Bashi tribe, had no difficulties in answering my questions. However, in the Bira villages, the administration was not as easy. I knew that the students in the villages had little experience in writing, so I asked the principals to give me all the Bira children who could read and write. These were students from upper grades, mostly from grades five and six. In this way, I got all the students with reading and writing skills who were present at school the day of the visit. This approaches the entire "population" of literate school children in the research villages.

The students came to a room to fill out the questionnaires. First I handed them out and asked the children to fill them out on their own at their own speed. They worked much more slowly than I had expected. When reading their answers, it became apparent that many had not understood the questions. So I had to go back to the school and retest them. From then on, I had a teacher read each question aloud and explain it, then wait for the children to answer, then proceed to the next question, etc. Even so, I had to return to the school a few more times to make sure I understood the answers. I called individual students back to check some points. This was quite a task in itself with the roads being muddy after rain (my transportation was by foot or bicycle), and with children attending school irregularly. I was able to return to the schools everywhere but in Baywana (the school of Gerechabo children). I returned to the Sezabo school four times.

Some teachers explained the questions by paraphrasing them. Others gave examples from their own lives (which, unfortunately, I did not record). I was present at the occasion of filling out the questionnaires, except once for a short time when another questionnaire was scheduled to be administered in another class at the same time. When reading the answers written during my absence, it seemed peculiar that remarkably more students than elsewhere had answered the question (52) about ancestors. When checking with the teacher, he admitted that he had "helped" the students because they did not seem to know. The answers of those students who could not give me a specific example on the subject were disqualified.

Elementary school children answered the questionnaire without objections; in fact they seemed to enjoy it. However, the attitudes of many of the secondary school students were not as positive. They did not think anything written in Swahili was as important as what was written in French. When I realized this, I gave them the option of answering in French if they preferred. They did not like being asked questions about their tribal customs. They would rather have studied for classes which gave them points than answered questions without being marked on them. When discussing the attitudes with the coordinator of these Catholic schools, he said that students seemed to loose interest in their tribal heritage toward the end of their secondary education, which only a small group of the emerging elite completed. However, those who continued to post-secondary education regained this interest. This was confirmed by the number of theses written on tribal customs in the "Institut Superieur Pedagogie" located at Muzi-Pela.

In Goma, I collected all available Bira schoolchildren one Sunday and brought them to my home. There were 14 children of more diverse ages than elsewhere. I interviewed younger children and filled out the questionnaires for them while the older ones did the work on their own.

The number of school children who completed the questionnaire was 311. As mentioned before, this was almost the entire population of literate school children in the research communities. Because more boys attend schools than do girls there were more boys (196, 63%) than girls (115, 37%). Often girls are kept home in the villages to take care of their younger siblings. Most of the students who answered the questionnaires were Catholic (272, 87%), even in Protestant schools. There were only 32 (10%) Protestant students while the others included two Moslems and four Kimbanguists. Most of the students (281, 90%) had been baptized. The majority of the children (135, 43%) were at urban schools for the simple reason that there were more schools in urban centres; 117 (38%) were at rural schools, and 59 (19%) at Nyankunde, which is between rural and urban. The ages of the students ranged from 8 to 21, with the median being 14 years. The majority of the children (222, 71%) attended primary schools, the rest (89, 39%) secondary schools. This is typical of the pyramidal structure of school system in Zaire (Studdstill 1961).

The answers of the school children show where traditions persist and where they are changing. As mentioned above, it is likely that the children wrote down the ideal rather than real. One might ask if questions about ancestors and witchcraft were answered openly. The occasional hilarious laughter suggested that at least some children knew something when they wrote "do not know" in those questions. Along with some informants and the general population, the children felt that such topics were not meant for white people to hear. However, the examples given by children are consistent with statements of key informants.

It would have been impossible to have parents fill out questionnaires because most adult Bira are illiterate. Although most time of the fieldwork was used for informal talk, I decided to use structured interviews to pinpoint changes. I asked parents questions similar to those asked in the children's questionnaires. In interviews, it was possible to discuss some subjects more deeply. The misunderstandings which occurred using the questionnaires, could be straightened out immediately. Often an interview took two hours.

Altogether, 106 parents were interviewed: 15 of them in each village, 25 at each mission station, and 11 in Goma. This is a small number compared to the total Bira population of the communities, except Goma, where there were only about twenty Bira adults with children in 1986. Although the number is small, it is greater than usual in many ethnographic works. This is not a statistically valid sample. Therefore, I cannot generalize beyond the group interviewed. But considering the depth of the interview and also my knowledge of these families outside the interview situation, the sample provided reliable information on issues of culture change. Again, there were questions that were too sensitive to be answered openly (e.g., the questions on ancestors and on children beating parents). Parents and children seemed to have similar attitudes to these topics.

At Ngbulanzabo and in Goma I chose to interview those parents I had interviewed several times previously for other purposes. By now we were used to each other and, consequently, interviewing relaxed. At Sezabo and Gerechabo, I interviewed the informants' families at first and then their relatives and friends who were in daily contact with them. During the census work, some families had become friends and interviewing was later possible.

I interviewed a parent of either sex, depending on who was willing to talk, 54 (51%) of all 106 interviewed were mothers and 52 (49%) fathers. Of all the parents interviewed, 11 (10%) were single women and 3 (3%) were single men, 15 (14%) were living in polygynous households and the rest 77 (73%) were living in monogamous households where both spouses were present. Although there were more single parents, only 6 were heading their households alone, but never in any of the villages.

The majority of the parents interviewed (69, 65%) were Catholic, although 36 (34%) were Protestant; one mother had recently turned to the Moslem faith of her husband, after having grown up as a Catholic. The range of the ages of the parents was from 20 to 75 with the median being 44.4 years.

The families interviewed had 451 children living at home. The mean number of persons in the households was 7.2, with 1.0 adult males, 1.6 adult females, 4.3 children (2.7 boys and 1.9 girls).

During the fieldwork, it became apparent that one of the crucial changes in parent-child relationship was the way young people were getting married. Therefore, I collected a fairly large number of cases (375) of marital arrangements (for first marriages) of parents and of their children by interviewing those parents whose children had already married. This was, again, not a statistical sample. I treat all couples living together the same way (although they may not have completed the bridewealth payments) because the Bira population as a general rule treated them as a married couple. Only first unions will be dealt with in this study; the reason for this will be explained in Chapter Eight.

It was common that people did not remember the exact dates of the start of their marriages; neither did all of them know their own ages. I had to estimate these by comparing to the historical time table (arrival of whites, which whites, independence, Simba-rebellion, etc.) or estimating roughly by description ("my breasts were not grown yet" or "I was just a child"). In the case of old people, I hope to have been able to estimate at least within a decade. Unions begun during the 20 past years were remembered more easily. Rather than presenting exact ages and years, I have tried to present the trend with approximate dates. Although I asked about the length of the time that the brides worked for their in-laws. I did not trust the responses given to me. However, information about whether a bride served her in-laws or not was more reliable because it was accompanied by explanations.

Compared to interviews on other topics, the Bira treated questions about their marriages in a matter-of-fact way. In Goma the topic was unpleasant to those men who had not paid any bridewealth and to those women whose boyfriends had not paid for them. One woman told me: "Ask me any time about how to raise my children. That topic I like. But don't ask me about my husbands!" So I asked her only about children. But her statement also indirectly answered my other questions.

As for school children, I have data on at least 80% of all literate students in the research communities. Because the principals of the schools sent all literate school children to me, only those who were absent that day did not participate. Because no inference was involved, the common Chi-square which measures the probability that a sample distribution represents a population distribution, was not appropriate to use. Instead, I have used Phi and Cramer's V which are descriptive measures of association.

On the other hand, parent interviews and the marriage arrangement interviews are not samples. It is, however, still legitimate to use a measure of association (Phi and Cramer's V) for non-random samples if results pertain only to the people included in the sample. The above measures of association have been chosen also because my data are of a categorical nature rather than of a continuous nature.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize that my understanding of Bira worldview comes mainly from long-term participant observation and informal talks with Bira. The questionnaires and interviews helped me to crystallize information into a quantifiable form to pinpoint the rate of change in different locations.

# CHAPTER THREE: BIRA HISTORY

Knowledge of the Bira past comes from miscellaneous sources. Stories about pre-contact times are sometimes still told orally by elders of lineages, although, with modern life style, story telling has lost its earlier importance. Recently, some chiefs and teachers have been interested enough to record oral history which is disappearing with the death of present lineage elders. Maeyens (1936,1938), a Belgian Catholic priest, has published short accounts of the history of each clan as told by Bira elders. Henry Stanley (1890) was the first foreigner to give an account of Bira when travelling through the continent. Constance-Marie (1947), a Belgian Catholic sister, published an ethnography of the Bira. It is an ethnography of the Bira from the early contact times and is an interesting document as such. However, one must keep in mind that it is written from a Western and Catholic point of view. The Royal Museum of the Belgian Congo compiled a summary of the early reports and observations on the Bira and some other tribes of the area (Van Geluwe 1956). Malherbe (1976), a Catholic priest, wrote a history of the Catholic mission in the district of the Lake Albert, which also included the history of colonialism in the area. This study is more critical than the one by Constance-Marie. Lately, Zairean students in the "Institut Superieur Pédagogie" of Bunia have investigated different aspects of culture and history of the Bira or adjacent tribes (Banga 1985, Bilongani 1981, Bungamuzi 1971, Matulu 1982).

Finally, the information about the general global history comes from Wolf (1982), African general history from Curtin (1964), and Congo national history from Slade (1959).

According to oral history recorded by Maeyens (1938), Bira have not always lived in their present area but have immigrated from the south. They say that they have come from near the mountain of Rwenzori and crossed the Semliki River, which flows from Lake Edward (Ammin) to Lake Albert (Mobutu). Overpopulation forced them to leave the former area. They have separated from another tribe, the Kumu, who moved westwards towards present Kisangani during the 16th century. They say that they left their brothers in the forest because their passage was blocked by the Lese people. These brothers are called "Bila" and their language is understandable to the Bira, although somewhat different from Kibira. The name Bira means "people of the forest".

Each Bira clan treasures its own history, because membership in a clan is of vital importance to each individual. The first of the Bira clans to come to the present area was the Babelebe who inhabit the forest in the western end of the Bira area (Map 2). The Basili and the Babobwa clans were next; the former inhabit the central area of the Bira and the latter inhabit the northernmost area. The Babukowe and the Babusoma fought against the Lendu people in the plains to gain their areas. The Banegbala followed the mountains and not the forest on their way to the present southeasten area of the Bira (Maeyens 1938). The Babumoko claim having been enslaved by the Ankole (in Uganda) before settling in the southernmost part of the Bira area (Maeyens 1936).

The Bira still often talk about their distant past. They say that interclan feuding was common. Men had to be alert all the time for attacks to the village. They could never sleep long in the morning (Bungamuzi 1971) and they could not walk anywhere outside their clan area for fear of attacks. For instance, inhabitants of Ngbulanzabo village of Babumoko clan told me that their families lost many men in warfare against Baywana people of Babugini clan (Gerechabo included). Women were free to move outside their villages but, if they carried male infants with them, these were often killed.

As noted in Chapter One, Bira history cannot be understood as isolated from the rest of the world, an argument which Wolf (1982) states forcefully about all societies in the world. Human societies form a global system which is different from the sum of self-contained societies and cultures. The first influence of European expansion on the African coast was by Portugal, when Diego Cam reached the mouth of the Congo river in 1483. With him came the first missionaries, soon followed by slave traders. Slave trade was to develop into a large scale operation, first from the West African and Coastal areas to Central Africa and inland. The slaves were transported to work on sugar cultivation in Brazil, West Indies, and the southern part of North America. Later, with the birth of European industrialization, raw materials for industry were sought from all parts of the world. The Bira did not know what happened to people who disappeared. Their interpretation was that white men captured black people in order to fatten them up and then eat them. This practice was believed to have continued all through the colonial period and is said to have finished when the country became independent.

Bira claimed that their tribal feuds ended when Arabs appeared in the area to trade for slave and ivory in the middle of the nineteenth century and used firearms against the Bira; but the wars may have continued longer. Some old people in the early 1970's told me that they had lost a family member in the Arab raids. I still met a few old people who were born while in exile in the Lendu country. The Arabs were aided by the Bangwana who now live around Mambasa district, west of the Bira. The Bangwana acquired the Swahili language in a Kingwana dialect which then became the lingua franca in the eastern part of the Congo (See Chapter Two).

With increased demand for wealth and raw material, European countries scrambled for resource-laden areas in Africa. Ivory, palm oil, rubber, and later various precious stones like diamonds and metals (copper, cobolt, magnesium, zinc, gold, and uranium) have been sought after by industrial countries up to the present time. The Arab raids were put down by King Leopold's officials but, as mentioned in Chapter One, these men carried out atrocities themselves which were ended by the Belgian government take over in 1908.

With the Belgian annexation, Bira, together with hundreds of other tribes, mutually hostile and belligerent, were united into a larger unit, the Congo. Political boundaries were arbitrary and ignored natural geographical or tribal affiliations. In many ways, the Bira look east, since some clans claim to have immigrated here from Uganda and the Bira speak Swahili, the lingua franca of East-Africa (Bira listen to radio programs broadcast from Nairobi). The government posts and missions arrived in this area last in the country, being furthest from the coast. When gold was found, the area north of the Bira became more important to the country, although it never reached the importance of Shaba with its copper mines.

The information about Bira colonial development comes from Malherbe (1976). In the immediate Bira area, the Belgians set up a post in Irumu in 1891. By 1901, there were three posts in a wider northeastern area: Irumu, Kilo (north of Bira area) and Mahagi (northeast of Bira area, see Map 3). The greatest attraction to the Belgians in this part of the country was the gold found at Kilo. The first camp was established in 1905, and since then, it has collected native population from a large area of several tribes as workers. Belgians displaced people for work without consulting them, a typical colonial procedure as described in Chapter One. In 1912, there were about 3000 indigenous workers in the mines; in 1924 the number had increased to about 16,000. Gold was transported from Kilo to Lake Albert, where a steam boat took it to Uganda and a railroad to the coast. This meant that roads had to be built for transportation. "he Kilo-Kasenyi road building took 1000 men to work. Before a road was built in Irumu area, 5000 Bira, sometimes including children, were used each month as porters for Europeans.

The mine workers had to be supported by food, so the Belgians ordered tribal people to grow food for the mines. Bira were docile and accepted this colonial yoke, unlike some other tribes such as Nyali and Lendu, the latter of whom rebelled and were put down by military action (Malherbe 1976). When doing a census in different locations, I constantly met people who had been working in mines and whose relatives were still working there.

The Belgians created population clusters from formerly dispersed populations. Not only compact villages near newly built roads, but bigger centres were formed, such as mine towns and administrative towns. With the arrival of Europeans, many epidemics (meningitis, smallpox, influenza) swept through the newly created centres (Malherbe 1976:301-303).

The Belgian government supported foreign owned plantations. There were several coffee and tobacco plantations in the Bira area, also some sugar cane and mixed crop plantations. In the 1920's, Greek and Asian merchants took over the commerce in the area, utilizing the indigenous population as workers (Matulu 1982). Market places were created by the Belgian administration, but informal exchanges were also practiced (Bilongani 1981). In the 1920's, barter and money economy were still operating simultaneously, but, by the 1940's, barter had ended (Matulu 1982).

Colonial administration altered the indigenous political structure. The Bira had an acephalous political structure before the influence of the Europeans, although old printed sources always mention Bira as having chiefs (van Geluwe 1956, Constance-Marie 1947). It is clear that European observers were biased at the time and thought that, if not kings, at least chiefs were universal. Some of my informants claimed that there were no chiefs in the old days. It seems likely that the Bira had a segmentary lineage system, similar to that described for the Lugbara (not far north of the Bira) by Middleton

(1965). Murdock (1959) also describes Equatorial Bantu as politically acephalous. Europeans created a system of village chiefs, each responsible for a village. The villagers were allowed to choose the chief, and, among the Bira, he is chosen from a particular lineage. Above village chiefs were (and still are) chiefs of village groups (chef de groupement), and chiefs of collectivities. In the entire Bira area, there were and still are five such collectivities: Boabokoe, Babelebe, Mobala, Andisoma, and Basili. Two collectivities (Boabokoe and Mobala) include two or three exogamous clans, the rest have one clan. These collectivities belong to the zone of Irumu, which in turn is part of so called sub-region of Ituri, and this is part of the region of Kibali-Ituri (now Upper Zaire), which then belongs to the nation of the Congo (now Zaire). Although some of the names have been changed since independence, the structure has stayed the same.

A village Bira complained about the change which has been happening over the decades in settling disputes. He said that, earlier, people used to settle their grievances within the lineages, but now if anything went wrong people would hurry to the chiefs. A chief of a grouping told me that increasingly more people rush to him and do not try to settle with the village chief. Often I heard a complaint that chiefs always "eat" the clients' money. There was an understanding that one cannot talk to a state administrator (which the chief was considered) without a money transaction. This is a substantial change from the traditional way of dealing with disputes, settling them within the lineage, whose elders participated in sharing a communal meal as a symbol of reconciliation, with no money involved.

Another change since the arrival of the Belgian administration was in land ownership. Traditionally, land was not owned privately but belonged to the clan, and clan members had usufructuary rights to land. Thus, everyone had access to the means of livelihood by horticulture. Even today, land is not owned in villages. Each lineage of the village has its designated area of land. Newcomers have to obtain the permission of the chief to use land. In towns and cities, newcomers have to buy it. When the towns grow, there is a shortage of land, and chiefs reduce the lands of the original lineage members by selling portions of land (belonging to lineages) to the newcomers. There was much complaining about the loss of lineage land in towns. The chiefs were said to be more eager for money than for upholding the rights of the original lineage members, although often the chiefs were part of the original lineages of the locality and thus morally obliged to look after their "own".

The duties of chiefs, since the beginning of the colonial rule, were to collect census information in their area, notify higher authorities about contagious diseases in their area, organize markets, collect taxes, and direct communal work (Banga 1985). These responsibilities are still continued in the independent country of Zaire.

The Congo gained its independence from Belgium in 1960. The political situation was in turmoil for years after. There were three men trying to set up their governments: official president Kasavubu in Leopoldville (now Kinshasa), Moise Tshombe in Katanga (now Shaba) and Patrice Lumumba in Stanleyville (now Kisangani). Although Lumumba was assassinated, his supporters, called "Simbas" ('lions') continued to fight against the government. The Simbas caused enormous havoc in the country until 1965, when President Mobutu Sese Seko took over the country. The centre of the turmoil was in the Stanleyville area. A Bira man, who was stationed in the city at that time lost his wife and seven sons. A Bira woman, now living in Goma (See Individual Variation among People of the Communities, in Chapter Five), still remembered the terror which the Simbas aroused in her and other inhabitants of Stanleyville. She remembers that Simbas killed people cruelly, that people would flee from them to the forest surrounding the city, and that mothers would abandon their infants because they would cry and hinder a fast escape. The Simbas came to the Bira area as well. Village people hid themselves in the bush when Simbas approached their village. In some places, government soldiers were able to fight the Simbas; in other places, the latter took over the administration posts. Stories are still told at night about these times. Although Simbas aroused terror in the population, they also drew unfading admiration for their magical powers to stay unharmed by bullets. President Mobutu refers to his calming influence over the turmoil in almost every speech he gives. Bira themselves do not take sides with the Simba or with the national army. They seem to have accepted events as they unfolded.

Mobutu has tried to create the feeling of one nationality among the many tribes comprising the independent republic. One of his methods was a special "authenticité" campaign in 1971. All the European geographical names were changed, and European Christian names of people were ordered to be changed into traditional ones. Then the "Congo" became "Zaire". Religious and political youth organizations were banned, and only one youth party was allowed to exist. Since then, the radio and television remind people daily that they are Zaireans and that their leader is the president. The government has regarded mission schools as a threat to its nationalistic goals and taken actions to unify and supervise all schools in the country (See Chapther Four).

The Nation state has governed the Bira from outside in many ways similarly to the colonial powers. Although the population has a right to vote for e.g., their president, in reality, people do not dare to vote against the established rule, as was clearly explained to me during the 1984 presidential election. Another example of colonial-like action was in 1979 when, without advance notice, the money was changed in the entire country. For a few days, the citizens were permitted to change their old money in the banks. However, most Bira (even in cities let alone in villages) did not have access to banks, and many lost all their savings. This is how, e.g., my Sezabo informant, S.S., lost his business. I could not get over my surprise that Bira would accept such calamity without showing hard feelings.

MacGaffey (1988) shows that there are two economies in Zaire: the official state economy and an underground, black or irregular economy. That the latter is so strong in Zaire, in her opinion, is partly due to the particular history of colonialism and partly to the nature of the present "predatory" state whose officials use the power of their office for personal gains by bribery, corruption, and embezzlement, and do not channel the profits back to the system. While these officials have become extremely wealthy, the wage earners have suffered. To give a concrete example: the index of real salaries was only 16 percent by 1977 and only 6 percent by 1979 of what it had been in 1960 (Huybrechts and Van der Steen 1981:241). And in terms of purchasing power, in 1979 an unskilled laborer had to work for five days to buy a kilo of rice, 116 days for a sack of manioc, seven for a kilo of dried beans and three for a loaf of bread (Mubake 1984:266-267). Rural Bira can always fall back to the subsistence economy and be fed, but urban Bira who have no fields to grow food are at the mercy of poor wages.

In summary, the Bira have been whisked about by outside forces without consideration for their own wishes, first by Arab traders, then colonial powers, consequently Simba rebels, and, finally, by the nation state. They have not rebelled against coercion but have seen themselves as powerless and accepted everything as inevitable. Meanwhile, they have experienced drastic changes in their way of life brought by these outside forces.

# CHAPTER FOUR: CHRISTIAN MISSIONS AMONG THE BIRA

## Catholic Missions

Along with Belgian administrators and foreign businessmen, another group of foreigners arrived in the country who had a vast influence on cultural change, not only among the Bira, but all over the country; this was Christian missionaries. The source for the history of the Catholic missions in the area, unless otherwise stated, is Malherbe (1976).

At first, from 1906 on, Catholic mission was represented in the Bira area by visits from "les Prêtres du Sacre-Coeur" from Beni, circa 100 kilometers south of the Bira. Later this Catholic organization left the area for so-called "White Fathers" (Pères Blancs, actually "Congrégation des Frères la Société des Missionaires d'Afrique"), who approached the area from Uganda under the authority of the Ugandan vicariate. The prefecture apostolic of Lac Albert was created in 1922, vicariate apostolic in 1933. After the white fathers started a mission post at Kilo, north of the Bira area, they also started a mission among the Bira, at first in 1913 at Nyakasanza, which now is the downtown of Bunia, and moved the station a year later to Muzi-Maria. After the nationalization of names, this was called Muzi-Pela. By now, all the Bira area belongs to the diocese of Bunia, whose bishop resides at Muzi-Pela. The "White Sisters" (Congrégation des Soeurs Missionaires de Notre Dame d'Afrique, founded in 1869) arrived in 1925 and the "Frères Maristes" in 1928 in Muzi-Maria. The former worked in education, especially for girls, and health, the latter in training of skilled workers in carpentry.

The early work of Roman Catholic missionaries was travelling in roadless bush to visit homes. As mentioned in Chapter Two, my informant, A.M., at Muzi-Pela had been the personal servant of Monsigneur Matthysen who came to the Congo in 1916. He remembered the early days when, the majority of time, his task was to take care of the priest during the trips. Missionaries recruited candidates for baptism and collected them at the mission station for classes. After a long process of stages (sympathizer, postulant, "cathécumène", each category subdivided further), which at first took four years to go through, they were baptized. Later the time was shortened and the "internats" had to stay at the station for six months before the baptism and some time (the length of which fluctuated from year to year) after it. Later yet, the second generation Christians were baptized as infants. When collecting life histories of Muzi-Pela inhabitants, several mentioned that their parents had moved to the mission station to follow the baptism classes and decided to stay on after baptism was received. Gifts given to the Bira by missionaries were the incentives to move to the mission station.

Chapels were erected in villages and left in charge of native cathechists, who were the mediators between missionaries and the natives. In 1925, a school, "Ecole Normale de la Préfecture" was started to train cathechists. The school was later called "Petit Seminaire". Later "Grand Seminaire" was established for further theological training; indeed, some natives became priests.

Opportunities were provided for natives to join religious orders, which in this area were "Servantes de Jésus" (first sisters in 1935) and "Servites du Très-Saint Rédempteur" (first brothers in 1936). However, very few Bira women, nine out of 215 local nuns, used this opportunity. Luru, Lendu, Hema, Lugbara, Nyali, and Kakwa women filled the ranks of sisters instead. No Bira men were serving in the order in 1986. Generally, Bira did not show as much ambition in the religious realm as other tribes in the Northeastern Zaire. (At both mission stations, most church positions were taken by people belonging to other tribes than Bira, although the stations are situated in the Bira area.) Catholic services and feasts with processions were taught to the natives. In the beginning people were said to have participated in processions in large numbers. During the field work, many Catholics commented that the number of participants was drastically down.

The Catholic mission has been in charge of the primary and secondary education in the country by a contract with the state since 1906. Politically important for the colonial administration were the schools for chiefs' sons. Health clinics and hospitals have also been one of the forms of mission work. All this required extensive building, which took a large part of missionaries' time. Workers were the natives who owed certain work hours for their upkeep at the station. This practice was later abandoned. Also paid labor was used.

According to the statistics given by the Catholic church of Zaire, the number of Roman Catholics in the country in 1985 was just over 14 million (total population of Zaire circa 30 million). The diocese of Bunia had about 400,000 Roman Catholics (out of the total population of 775,000). One receives a picture of the change during the past decades by comparing figures from the past: In 1913-1914 the number of Roman Catholics in Bunia was 63, in 1933-1934 it was 7,917 (Malherbe 1976, vol vi, appendix 43, 62).

When children were born to Christian parents, the procedure was different from that of the pioneer times of the missions. Such children were baptized as infants. When they turned from ten to fourteen or so years old, they attended (and still do) a cathechumen for two years. They are confirmed by a bishop at a special occasion where they profess their faith.

The Catholic church still has cathechists in each chapel. The chief cathechist (or "chef secteur") is more educated than the former, and the so-called "cathéchète" or "pasteur" has received a teaching diploma in the church. Although these men cannot perform communion, they may preach and direct the other church liturgies. There are now 54 bishops in Zaire directly under the authority of the pope of Rome. The Catholic church has 19 grand seminaries all over the country, with 1780 students enrolled in them in 1985. The theological faculty of the university of Kinshasa had 400 students in 1985. Religious institutions and schools for novices had 661 men and 718 women enrolled in 1985.

Although the Catholic church is known for the importance it lays upon the ordained clergy, the Zaire church has encouraged the participation of laymen in the services and in other church activities. For example, laymen are used in scripture reading during the services. A couple of years ago, special village councils were established with lay leadership to initiate improvements in village buildings. The latter program has been less successful than the former.

Catholic services last about an hour or a bit more. The liturgy follows the universal Roman Catholic order. In Zairean churches, indigenous instruments are used, such as drums and harps. The sermons are about 10 to 15 minutes long. They emphasize aspects of contemporary Christian living, referring to the text of the day. The congregation knows its part in the service by heart and participates in it. In the Bira area, services are usually held in Swahili; in larger centres, they are also in French and Latin. (Only one Belgian priest preached in Kibira.)

## Protestant Missions

Because Zaire belonged to Catholic Belgium as a colony, Roman-Catholicism was the favored religion and Protestantism was disparaged. Nevertheless, there are a multitude of Protestant groups of different denominations in Zaire. One Protestant group prevails among the Bira, namely the Plymouth Brethren. (Some northern Bira belong to the influence of Africa Inland Mission, another Protestant mission organization; but they are not dealt with in this study). The Plymouth Brethren originated in early nineteenth century England. It is a Biblically oriented, conservative, non-hierarchical denomination, and its emphasis is on the conversion of an individual. Instead of the liturgies of Catholicism, it favors spontaneous services. In this study, the term "Protestant" is used for the Plymouth Brethren, as opposed to Catholic, because the population refers to the Brethren assemblies this way. However, it is recognized that the Plymouth Brethren are only one kind, and perhaps atypical, of the many Protestant churches in Zaire.

The first Protestant missionary in northeastern Congo was Apolo Kivebulaya, an outstanding evangelist of the Anglican church of Uganda, a native Ugandan, who started mission work on his own in Mboga, circa 30 kilometers south of Bira area, as early as 1896. When Belgium took over Mboga, he returned to Uganda with an impression that the Bira would have been ready to welcome the gospel (Slade 1959:389). The Plymouth Brethren started work far south in Katanga (now Shaba) in 1897 among the Kuba people (Slade 1959). Charles Harter, a member of African Inland Mission, came to Nyankunde in 1921 but moved soon to Bogoro, north of this location, leaving Nyankunde to the missionaries of Immanuel Mission, whose first delegates came in 1925 sent by the Plymouth Brethren assemblies in North America. There have been but a few missionaries at a time in several mission stations; this is true also among other populations than the Bira, such as the Pygmies, Nyali, Lese, Bila. Other non-Bira stations include: Lolwa, Mambasa (which later separated from the Nyankunde mission for doctrinal reasons), Mabukulu, Akokora, Tchabi and Intende (Ayaka 1982).

Like Catholic missionaries, the early Protestant (Plymouth Brethren and others) missionaries made contacts with the population by travelling on foot from one homestead to another talking to people (in Kibira), giving them western gifts, and listening to their tales at camp-fire. Old Bira remembered those times with nostalgia, because modern missionaries do not do it any more. Missionaries are now involved in their specialized roles in missions and have hardly time for informal visiting. Again, like Catholic missions, the Protestant missions channelled their work in the avenues of church "planting" (establishing new branches), education, and health care. The first converts were the [illegible] who worked for the missionaries in their homes.

In Zaire, the relationships between different Protestant mission organizations have not always been smooth, although more strife has been experienced between Protestants and Catholics. The Congo Protestant Council was created in 1956 (Slade 1959) to be a forum between Protestant missionaries. It is now called "Eglise du Christ au Zaire" (ECZ) and is governed by Zaireans independently of missionaries; all Protestant churches must be registered under it. The executives of this organization are trying to create a Christian church which is more suitable to African realities than the church imported by the missionaries (Bokeleale 1973). The representatives of the Plymouth Brethren church attend ECZ annual meetings in Kinshasa, the capital.

The Plymouth Brethren missionaries gave minimal training to men who then acted as evangelists among the population. These men are part-time specialists who do not receive remuneration for their church work. The churches elect elders who are in charge of the church work and Christians in the community. Mother churches establish chapels in villages, and certain elders of the mother church supervise the elders of the newly established chapels. The Plymouth Bretheren practice adult baptism, which is preceded by several months of catechism classes.

During the "authenticité" campaign of President Mobutu, the Plymouth Brethren assemblies took the name "Communauté des Assemblés des Frères Evangeliques au Zaire" (CAFEZA). CAFEZA has established chapels in several villages in Bira area and among other tribes. According to the figures given to me from the church office at Nyankunde, the total number of baptized church members of CAFEZA in 1985 was 18,660. The population of all different Protestant groups in Zaire amounts to 8,106,000.

The services of the assemblies are much longer than Catholic services. The first part includes congregational and choir singing. At Nyankunde, numerous choirs perform one after the other, accompanied by indigenous and western instruments (guitars, trumpets, accordions, drums, and harps). Sermons last at least an hour, and sometimes several people give their message or news. After the first service and a short break, another service is held for those church members whose Christian life is supposedly in order. This service consists of short turns of speeches by male members only, and of communion.

## Relationship between Catholic and Protestant Missions

The relationship between Catholic and Protestant missions has been strained in the past (Slade 1959, Malherbe 1976 etc). King

Leopold favored Belgian missionaries (Catholic in practice) to non-Belgian ones for political reasons. At the turn of the century, it was the English-speaking missionaries who informed humanitarian societies about the atrocities happening in the Congo. Catholic missions were granted state support, plenty of land, and, what was more important, state subsidies for education programs. Protestant missions had to run their programs with private funds. Ecumenical trends were not in the air until the last two decades. Catholics regarded Protestants as heretics, and Protestants did not consider Catholics as "saved". Bishop Matthysen used the phrase "Crocodiles of the Lake Albert" for Protestant missionaries (Malherbe 1976:1329). Catholic cathechists were advised not to engage in any dialogue with Protestants. Malherbe (1976) states that the fuel for mission expansion in Ituri was competition between the two missions. Some old Protestant missionaries speak of outright persecution by Catholics in the past.

Since the second Vatican Council and the organization of Augustin Cardinal Bea in 1961, the Catholic church has been interested in communication with Protestant churches. Also, the turmoil after the independence (1960) drew all missionaries together, because all of them experienced a time of persecution by the Congolese. During my field work, some Catholic priests expressed their wishes for organizing mutual meetings, which have not materialized because of fundamentalist Protestants' resistance to ecumenicism. A big hurdle was removed when the government announced in 1946 that it would also subsidize Protestant schools (Slade 1959). By now, the medical missions of both churches work together under the same territorial division, and the government has appointed one doctor from a Protestant mission station as the supervisor of all medical work in the area.

According to the school district offices, the Catholic schools under the Muzi-Pela coordination had 46,759 students with 1,445 teachers in 1985, while the Protestant CAFEZA schools under the Nyankunde coordination had 8,367 students with 291 teachers. Naturally, this numerical difference between Catholic and Protestant schools is reflected in my sample of school children who answered the questionnaire (see Chapter Two).

As missions were in charge of almost all schools in the past, their role in nationalism has interested researchers. Catholic schools, run by Belgian religious personnel, would have more reliably inculcated allegiance to Belgian colonial rule than Protestant schools, which were nearly all English or American and were commonly regarded by Belgians as agents of rival imperial powers (MacGaffey 1982). It is noteworthy that Simon Kimbangu, the starter of the separatist religious movement (See Colonialism in Chapter One) in the Lower Kongo, had been educated in a Protestant (British Baptist) school. The Belgians considered his movement political rather than religious (Andersson 1958). It has been stated that Catholicism, as a relatively authoritarian religion, would likely develop subservient attitudes in the minds of converts, while the Protestant emphasis on personal study of the scriptures encouraged the spirit of independence, and could lead to revolt against authority (Dufonteny, cited in Markowitz 1973:39). However, both missions saw themselves as permanent authority figures to the Congolese, and did not anticipate independence. They did not try to evoke feelings of nationalism (Markowitz 1970). It was said that, before independence, Protestants did not want to give any education beyond basic literacy lest it "spoil the natives" (Markowitz 1973:53), and secondary education before independence was offered by the Catholics only for those who chose a religious career (Mabusa 1966:24). Since independence, secondary and post-secondary education have become more accessible to the Zaireans, but the pyramidal structure of the school system (large numbers in lower grades, small numbers in higher grades) is still very conspicuous (Studdstill 1976).

The Zairean government has regarded foreign mission schools as a threat to its nationalistic goals; in 1975, it took over them. After this, religious teaching was forbidden in schools, and religious youth organizations were banned. Then daily school schedule included hours of "animation", dancing to the beat of drums with nationalistic chanting. However, the government experienced enormous difficulties in running the schools. Funds were lost or stolen on the way from the capital. The school system was in chaos. In 1977, the government asked the missions to take over their former schools, which they did on the condition that they could enforce their religious rules of conduct and continue their religious teaching. Although "animation" is not practiced at mission schools any more, flag raising and singing the national anthem are a daily routine. The government continues to finance the schools, but salaries cannot keep up with the inflation rate. In 1985, a teacher in the elementary school earned 800 zaires a month (about US $13).

Although the Catholic and Protestant churches have not been united in the past in their operations, their attitude towards the indigenous populations in Zaire has been similar. For instance, both churches attacked the ideology of ancestors and witchcraft, the two corner stones of the traditional society. With the advent of Christian churches, these beliefs and practices were strongly condemned as heathen. By the 1980's, Bira were accustomed to calling ancestor spirits Satans. For the Bira, there existed a double bind situation whereby the traditional value of ancestors as showing the right way to the living conflicted with the stigma of being heathen. While dealing with ancestors was a man's task in the past, presently many women are being possessed by ancestor spirits. This made the ancestor cult less valuable in men's eyes because women were not considered as important as men. Although witchcraft was banned in the churches, it was still widely practiced but was suffering confusion because of new influences from different tribal populations who occupied the new population centres.

In the past, Catholic missionaries criticized Protestant missionaries for being too strict about traditional alcohol drinking and dancing (Malherbe 1976). The Protestant missions condemned these traditional practices categorically. Some Bira claimed that the reason for the lesser popularity of the Protestant church was its demand for absolute abstinence. Because Bira classified alcoholic drinks in the category of food, many felt that the Protestant faith would make them go hungry. However, both churches had similar rules of conduct. For example, the rule for teachers at both Catholic and Protestant schools stated that a teacher would be dismissed for public drunkenness. The actual dismissal depended on local enforcement of the rules, and many cases of drunkenness were not reported to higher authorities in either schools. Actually, the Catholic catechism states that drunkenness is a great sin. This conflicts with Bira thinking, which stresses that a person has not received the full value of alcohol unless he is drunk. In reality, when walking through villages, I saw many people, belonging to both denominations, who were intoxicated. The difference between Catholics and Protestants in this matter is that a Catholic can go to confession and be absolved of his sins.

One of the differences between the Catholic and Protestant churches has been that the former do not encourage laymen to study the Bible. However, recent development in Catholicism has reduced this difference. I met several Catholics whc claimed to attend Bible study groups. In fact, a group of Catholic women on the outskirts of Nyankunde were looking for a teacher, either Catholic or Protestant, who would teach them to read so that they would be able to read the Bible. After long negotiations, a Protestant missionary started teaching them. Some Bira claimed that they attend both Catholic and Protestant services, although the majority would attend one kind only. Some mixed—marriages between the two religious denominations caused confusion. Men claimed that wives should follow their husbands' church affiliation, which often, but not always, happened. It did not happen, e.g., to my Sezabo Informant D.J. In the matters of marriage, the

Protestants generally thought that it was more important to get married, even if to a Catholic, than to continue to stay unmarried.

Today one may hear both Bira and missionaries claim "Mungu ni moja" ('God is one' meaning that both Catholics and Protestants have one mutual God). Much energy was spent in strained relationships between Catholic and Protestant churches and, yet, in reality, the application of the teachings of both churches, especially the view of God, among the indigenous population has been very similar indeed, which will become clear on the forthcoming pages.

# CHAPTER FIVE: THE SIX COMMUNITIES STUDIED

There are no more isolated folk societies in Zaire. As suggested, with colonization, all folk societies were arbitrarily drawn into the whole of the colonial nation of the Congo. Similarly, there are no more people who are not affected by Christianity. Therefore, it was not possible to study a fully traditional community as a contrast to a Christian community.

As Christianization and westernization happened simultaneously in Zaire history, it was necessary to study communities which had experienced these influences in different degrees. With this in mind, the six communities were selected to represent a continuum from folk to urban (most untraditional) society (see Chapter One). Two were mission stations, where the direct influence of Christianity presumably was the most intensive.

The majority of Bira villages are based on traditional lineages and have only few people from outside living in them. Sezabo (see Map 1) is representative of such villages. Less frequent are villages such as Gerechabo, which have a foreign plantation in their midst. The plantation draws workers from wider surroundings and from different tribes. Such villages are based on traditional lineages but have a large number of outsiders living among original inhabitants. Ngbulanzabo was a traditional village until recent years, when it accepted a Bible school into the village. It is unique among Bira villages in this respect. Nyankunde is the only Protestant mission station among the Bira, but Catholic missions have three stations:

Badya, Nyakasanza (Bunia), and Muzi-Pela (Bunia). Although Badya is in charge of Catholic work in the three villages of this research, it was not chosen as a mission station for this research because its population was very small and consequently it was not comparable to the Protestant mission station, Nyankunde. Muzi-Pela was more comparable to Nyankunde in its size, institutions, and its status of being the first (Catholic) mission in Bira area. Goma offered an example of urban living far from the Bira tribal area. In the following, the communities are described in the order of most traditional to most urban centres.

## Sezabo

Sezabo was a village belonging to Andisoma clan. Sezabo people said that they have come from the Lese separately from other Andisoma people but, nevertheless, have been regarded as their brothers and consequently have never been able to marry other Andisoma people, since Bira practiced clan-exogamy. Sezabo people lived near the edge of the Bira area. The area of the Geti people (southern Lendu) was in easy walking distance. At times, the most recent in 1983, intertribal hostilities broke out in this border area.

According to the chief's statistics, the population of the village was just over 1,100 indigenous people. In addition to them, there were other 180 people (children included), who, although Zaireans, have come from outside to work with the administration, with the Catholic chapel or school, with the Protestant chapel or in commercial business. The latter were physically separate from the rest of the village. There were a few Sezabo men who were settling back to their home village after working in mines for years. The indigenous Sezabo population lived in a cross shaped string of mudhuts. The village was composed of four lineages (Babumanye, Bandikisiya, Banitakoma, Baninkama), each one having its designated areas and appointed lineage heads. Earlier, the village was situated on top of the mountain range, but now the main village is at the foot of this. However, many old men still lived on top of the mountain with their families. It was a custom that old men stayed in the old site of the village longer than younger men. The lay-out of the village, where indigenous people and the newcomers were separated from each other, was an expression of the folk society protecting its group solidarity and kin organization against encroachment of a larger society based on different principles.

The four lineages, together with the indigenous people of the neighboring villages, belonged to the sub-clan of Andisoma, called Wanibunda.

The distinctive character of the village may be changed in the future, because the chief was encouraging the population to move nearer to the road (leading to Nyankunde and from there to other population centres) which was a few hundred meters from the present location. The chief was following administrative policy since colonial times. The villagers were planning to move there gradually when their houses deteriorated. Lineage areas may become mixed then.

According to Redfield (1953:7), one of the characteristics of a folk society is its isolation. Sezabo was connected to the outer world by a road which at times was hardly passable by car. There were only a few bicycles in the village, sometimes a pick-up truck came there to bring stock to the village store. Most people walked by foot whenever they needed to go. Nyankunde, where one can take a bus to Bunia, is nine kilometers away. People move freely between centres and villages, especially to markets. During the year of fieldwork among the Bira, Sezabo village experienced the first break-in by thieves, while a family was in church. The thieves were not found, but the thought was that they must have been people from elsewhere, since no villager could be conceived to have done.

The vast majority of the inhabitants of Sezabo were Catholics. There was a Catholic chapel in the far end of the village with weekly services by the resident cathechist. He also taught catechumen classes for young boys and girls. Since 1965, the Catholic village school has had six grades, or the complete elementary school (Malherbe 1976). By spring 1986, there were 344 students, six teachers and a director in the school. The cathechist, the director and the teachers lived near the school and church compound. The chapel was a "secteur" of the parish of Badya, situated some 20 kilometers from here.

Only about a dozen families, mostly Geti (Southern Lendu) newcomers, belong to the Protestant chapel which was established in 1930. It belongs to Nyankunde mother church and its seven elders are responsible to Nyankunde elders for the management of the church. A normal Sunday service would draw about 20 worshippers, and monthly special services where several villages joined together would draw c. 50 people.

The "Santé Communautaire" program of Nyankunde Medical Centre was training a villager (informant T.M.) to treat common ailments. During the fieldwork, he was treating patients in his home, but plans were to build him a dispensary for his work (which was done in 1987). He would get medicine from Nyankunde.

The chief, an indigenous Sezabo inhabitant, has his office near the main road. He meets with elders and carries out administrative and jural duties there. Near his house was one shop run by a Hema. He sold palm oil, kerosene, sugar, tea, soap, matches, canned food, exercise books, pens, etc.

The villagers are horticulturalists. Their fields are outside the village cluster, each family having several fields in several locations. Both housing and field areas are part of the lands belonging to the four lineages of the village. Once a week, there is a market right at Sezabo, and village women can sell their garden products there or buy other products they do not have. Women may choose to go to other markets near by on other days. Especially popular is the market at Talolo, on top of the hill. There, women can buy products which come from the Geti country, especially fish from the Lake Mobutu (former Lake Albert). Nyankunde market is nine kilometers away, and women sometimes sell their garden products there.

There were no full time specialists in the village. All lived off their fields. But a couple of men were tailors and went daily to work at Talolo, the busy market place. Many young married men went to dig gold near the streams on the mountains. Since the government made gold trade legal in 1982, all parts of Zaire have experienced a boom in this work. Men grouped together to share the work and the results, if any. This activity increased alcohol distilling and consumption—in the village as in other localities. When a work crew finished the day's work, the members went for a drink. Drunken noises were often heard through the night.

The school children have to work in their teachers' and director's fields as part of the wages for the staff, according to an agreement between the school and the parents of the children at the time. Teachers' salaries have not kept up with inflation.

Sezabo is based on kin-organization; its inhabitants feel solidarity against other people. The villagers are homogenous in their livelihood; all are dependent on horticulture. The majority are still illiterate. However, the village is not totally isolated from the outer world. Radios bring news from the capital; roads and paths, frequently used, connect the village to other villages and urban centres. Most children spend at least some time at school, although education is not considered very important. Virtually everyone is affiliated with a Christian church.

Sezabo is placed on the folk end of the folk-urban continuum, although it is not a "pure" folk community in Redfield's terms because, for instance, it has a school to spread literacy, and a Catholic and a Protestant chapel to spread "great" tradition. Preliteracy and "little" tradition are among the features of folk communities (Redfield 1953:7, 1962:302-303). However, the village has definite characteristics of folk society by Redfieldian standards. The village is structured on lineages, and these lineages feel group solidarity against outsiders. The number of the latter is smaller than in any other of the research communities in this study. There is very little specialization among the horticulturalists in the village. Although there is a school in the village, a large proportion of the population has remained illiterate.

## Ngbulanzabo

Ngbulanzabo belongs to the clan of Babumoko, who claim to have come from the Ankole, across the Semliki river, with some Hema people. Babumoko are the smallest clan of the Bira, consisting of only four villages. They belong to Musezo grouping and, together with some other groupings, to the "collectivité" of Marabo. The village itself is composed of three lineages, Banikatyongo, Bandigobu, and Banisigolo; the chief is chosen by the villagers from the first of these lineages.

Ngbulanzabo is a village which has gone through drastic changes during the last few years. In 1974, when I first became acquainted with the village, it was a quiet, homogenous village with only a few outsiders living in it. These outsiders were a few Geti (southern Lendu people) and Hema cow herders who were involved with the running of the Protestant chapel in the village. These few outsiders did not disturb the routine of everyday life in the village nor the resources available for everyone. The situation was then about the same as it is now at Sezabo.

In 1975, the population of the village was 316. In 1985, the population was reported to be 1,237. The most conspicuous change during the ten years was the buildings erected for the "Insitut Biblique" which in 1982 had moved from Itende, the Nyali tribal area north of Bunia, to this village. The Bible institute had about 150 people, including the families of the students and teachers, and, furthermore, a foreign missionary couple. Their arrival had been approved by the church elders of the Protestant church and also by the village and grouping chiefs. Despite the formal permissions, the change disturbed the routine of the village life and the natural resources of the village, at least at first. It also enforced the existing trends of urbanization as defined by Redfield (1953): literacy, "great" tradition, and heterogenous nature of the population. This occurred because the students were literate, they studied Christian theology, and they came from various tribes in eastern Zaire.

Other increases to the population were Hema cattle herders who now numbered about 150 with their families. They lived in the vicinity of the village and used pasture lands. I once was listening to a discussion between a Hema and a Bira villager concerning the move of one of the former's wives to the village with some cattle. The Bira man (my informant, C.N.), who was the chairman of the local cattle board (belonging to the Projet de Bétail d'Ituri) explained to the Hema that the villagers were concerned about the limitation of the grass land around the village. The area was becoming over grazed. The men, however, decided that they could go ahead with the move and leave the worry about the pastures to God.

Not only private villagers but also the chiefs were aware of the ecological dangers of the increasing population: there was fear of the depletion of cultivated land, in addition to the limitation of the pasture land and shortage of fire wood. When I asked the chief of the village (who has been in charge since the Belgian colonial administration set up offices for village chiefs) why he did not refuse requests from outsiders to enter the village, he was horrified. According to him, it would have been rude to do so. Thus, the Bira feel that they cannot control the progress of acculturation.

It was estimated that, other than the above, there were about 200 Bira or Geti people who had moved from elsewhere. Several Bira women, who originated from Ngbulanzabo, had brought their marital families here. It was not according to tradition, but they explained that they had had difficulties with witchcraft in their patrilocal residence and decided to move here. A woman's relatives were considered harmless and, to these families, it was safer to live here. During the last few years, there have been a few marriages involving both partners from the same village; this is not traditional because of the patrilocal residence rule and clan exogamy. However, with the mixed population base, this change is now inevitable.

In the past, the location of the village and fields had changed a few kilometers every few years. In the 1930's it had been over 15 kilometers away from the present location, when the Belgian administration had requested the villagers to take care of a trail going from Irumu to Boga. Since 1974, there had been some fluctuation of population between the fields and the village, a long string of houses, on top of the mountain; but with rapidly increasing population, it had become more sedentary. When the Bible Institute moved to the village, the villagers who had cows were asked to move further away from the school, not to disturb the school activity. The village market, which had taken place in the school area for decades, had to be abandoned. These changes had caused much turmoil and hot feelings in the village. Those villagers who were slow to move their cattle herds away from the school area found that their cows came home lacking a leg. The villagers claimed that by 1985 all strifes about dislocating homes and cows had been forgotten.

The lay-out of the village was not organized by lineage sectors as in Sezabo; the lineages were mingled with each other and newcomers. There were several clusters of village population. The oldest centre was in the fields, which was called Linda. People lived dispersed near their fields. Old people liked this location but some younger ones lived there, too. The main part of the village, accessible by a narrow road from the Kisangani-Bunia main road, was on top of the hill, called Tayalabo. Younger men lived there with their families on either side of the road. The Bible school, a Protestant church, and a Protestant elementary school occupied one end of the village. Between the village string and the village fields, there were the fields of the girls' home economic school at Nyankunde. These fields were started in the late 1970's to support the boarding students at the school, since market prices were high. A third part of the village was a bit aside from the main village. This side has been growing during the last few years.

The village was unusually Protestant for a Bira village. In 1977, in a sample of 125 adults, there were 76 Catholics, 39 Protestants, and 10 non-affiliated. The Protestant chapel was started in 1963 under the mother church of Marabo. Villagers still talked much about a Protestant missionary couple who spent much time living with villagers. A couple of Bira families (one of them my informants E.C. and C.N.) became excited about the church work and continued it enthusiastically. The villagers built a stone and concrete church by themselves by carrying stones on top of their heads two at a time to the building site. The church was the first building with a tin roof. Since then several villagers have acquired tin roofs. The Bible Institute built several huge brick buildings for classrooms and a couple of smaller brick houses for the staff. The Bible school students have two rows of mud huts with thatched roofs in two locations near the school buildings.

The Protestant elementary school, as most Protestant schools under the Nyankunde coordination, was sponsored by a North American charity organization, "Compassion", which donated uniforms, excercise books, and pens to the school children, and a set of clothing a year to the teachers. Many Zairean school children were corresponding with American sponsor families. The correspondence and translation were organized from Nyankunde.

Nyankunde reached out to this village also in health care. About once a month, a moving health clinic visited the village. The clinic took care of expectant mothers, infants up to 5 years old, leprosy and

TB patients.

In 1975, there were at least twice as many Catholics as Protestants in the village. In spite of the boost to the Protestants from the Bible school, the majority of the villagers were Catholic. The next village of the same clan, called Gangu, had a Catholic chapel and Catholic school. The chapel was built of brick by the villagers soon after the Ngbulanzabo people built their chapel of stone. Like Sezabo, the Ngbulanzabo "secteur" belonged to the parish of Badya which was situated about 25 kilometers away.

For years, all the school children from Ngbulanzabo attended the Catholic school, since the Protestant school has existed only a few years (since 1983). Still, the Catholic families sent their children to Gangu. The Catholic school at Gangu had 193 students in six grades and six teachers. In 1978, the school had more students, 270. The Protestant school at Ngbulanzabo had 209 students in five grades and five teachers. It is likely true that the sponsorship of Compassion had drawn students from the Catholic school, which was an explanation heard in the village.

All the people of Ngbulanzabo, the indigenous villagers and the new comers, including the Bible school students and staff (except the foreign missionary couple), lived off their fields. A veterinarian for the PBI (Projet de Bétail d'Ituri), a couple of tailors and carpenters did the same. A number of villagers used temporarily paid help in their fields. Two Protestant pastors had started commercial cultivation and selling of their field crops to the Nyankunde hospital and nursing school. A former Protestant pastor went into business in fire wood and lumber, hiring a large number of workers. He owned a pick-up truck, and one other Bira was planning on buying a car.

The women actively attended various markets. As mentioned, the village market had to be dropped when the Bible school entered the village. Gangu market met twice a week, and most Ngbulanzabo women attended it regularly. In the 1970's, women went to sell their garden products in the Marabo market but, in the 1980's, Nyankunde market had overpowered the former; Ngbulanzabo women walked all the way there, 15 kilometers, carrying heavy baskets on top of their heads. They left the village in the morning and returned after dark in the evening. If they were saving for a special project, e.g., a piece of cloth or a son's bridewealth payments, they would go several times a week. Sometimes sons or husbands helped by transporting a bag of potatoes on a bicycle. Occasionally, Ngbulanzabo women attended Talolo market near Sezabo.

The German cattle project, whose headquarters were in Bunia, encouraged cattle herding in a large area. The project provided pest control by "dips" (medicated water pools) which were offered to herders with a low price. In Ngbulanzabo, several families owned cattle. Most Bira owned a few head but had others take care of them, either Bira or Hema families.

Ngbulanzabo people did not engage in gold digging, perhaps because they would have had to go far from their village to do it. There was no breaking into houses in the village, but the chief reported a few cases of thievery in the fields.

Compared to Sezabo, Ngbulanzabo was not as isolated nor as traditional. The road access to Ngbulanzabo was better than to Sezabo. Although its physical appearance was never organized strictly according to the lineage structure, the three indigenous lineages made up the core of the village. However, the village structure has radically changed during the last decade, with the influx of large numbers of outsiders. After initial turmoil and hard feelings, the villagers accomodated newcomers and were willing to share the limited resources of land, pastures, firewood, and water. Firewood had to be carried from far away, and, during the dry season, water sources dried up. The village will experience more radical changes if the plans for electricity and water pump for the Bible school materialize in the future.

Ngbulanzabo is placed next to Sezabo away from the folk end of the folk-urban continuum, mainly because of the influx of large numbers of outsiders. The resulting changes have been substantial to the village community. Before the immigrants, it was similar to what Sezabo is now: a homogenous lineage-based community. The outsiders made the village heterogenous, brought in urban characteristics such as specialization (Bible school teachers, increase in literate people), more enforcement of a "great" tradition, Christianity. In addition, more changes are being planned. However, the village retains folk features, similar to those of Sezabo, in that the original lineages of the village form the basis for the village structure and life. Most inhabitants practice traditional horticulture. Most marriages are conducted with outsiders from the village, which is the tradition.

## Gerechabo

Gerechabo people belonged to the clan of Babugini. They said that they were Toro people from Uganda. Two Bira and one Hema came accross Semliki river and these people were the ancestors of the Babugini. There are 16 villages belonging to the same clan and administrative grouping, whose chief had his office in the next village from Gerechabo, called Bayhana (Belgians called it Baywana). Part of the people are said to be offspring of those captured in inter-clan feuding. Babugini people belonged to Mobala "chefferie" whose chief had his offices in Marabo, some 20 kilometers from Gerechabo. Banegbala and Babumoko-clans belonged to the same chefferie with the Babugini.

Gerechabo was the most mixed of the three villages in that only a minority of its population belonged to one of the three indigenous lineages of the village (Bandigaiibe, Bandiguma, and Banibalabo); the rest had come from outside. I conducted a census in Gerechabo. The total population was just above 500. One fifth, or 100 people, belonged to households which were headed by an indigenous Gerechabo man (or twice a woman). Another 100 belonged to households whose head was from another village belonging to the same clan as the villagers, but not the village lineages. Again, 100 belonged to households whose heads were from some other tribe, including Hema or Geti (southern Lendu), Nandi, Nyali, or Lugbara. The rest, about 200 people, belonged to households whose heads were Bira from other clans than those of the local lineages.

Many people of Gerechabo, even the ones who were born there, had lived in several places elsewhere in Zaire, mostly in mine areas. They had come to Gerechabo to return to their lineage areas. Outsiders had come because there was a coffee plantation near the village, started in 1950 by a Belgian. This plantation initially drew some families from outside. Once a family had moved in, some of their relatives followed them and usually most of the offspring stayed. The plantation was abandoned at independence in 1960 for five years and then taken over by another Belgian. In 1974, an Iranian man bought the plantation and continued with the help of an Arab manager, who then married a Gerechabo girl. In 1985-1986, there were 16 workers at the plantation whose families lived in Gerechabo. In the past, there had been 50 workers and their families. The plantation owner complained that men would rather dig gold than work for wages in his plantation.

The village was able to accommodate outsiders with ease. There was enough land for fields, enough water and firewood. Everyday life did not differ from that of other villages. An observer could not have known that the majority of the people of the village were not indigenous inhabitants.

The lineage structure of the village had been mixed with outsiders for a longer period than that of Ngbulanzabo, years before independence. Each lineage had its head, so did the new comers as a group, but the village chief and vice-chief belonged to the original Gerechabo lineages. During my field work, the villagers met to discuss a break-in problem which had occurred in the village. The thief was not from outside but from the village. This was different from the reports from the other two villages, Sezabo and Ngbulanzabo, where thievery was thought of as coming from outside. Food theft from fields happened occasionally here, as in the other two villages.

There was a definite change from traditions in this village in that there were many in-village marriages, i.e., where both spouses grew up in the village. This could not have happened in a traditional patrilineal village with a patrilocal residence rule, where boys stayed in their childhood village and brought their wives from outside, and where the girls married out. This made the childhood experience different for the next Gerechabo generation, because many of them had both sets of grandparents near by. In the section "Comparison of the Localities", the relatives of the spouses interviewed in each locality are presented in Tables 4 and 5. They show that Gerechabo is different from the other two villages and more like the cities in that the spouses have miscellaneous relatives living in the same village.

The villagers obtained their livelihood from their fields. Some inhabitants grew coffee for sale in addition to their regular crops. As elsewhere, women sold garden products in several markets in the chain of villages in their clan area. Occasionally they would walk to Nyankunde market, but it was 20 kilometers and meant an overnight trip. Most young men did gold digging in groups. They would go to work for a day or two at a time. There were several shops in the village, unlike in the previously discussed villages. The owners were local people who went to get their supplies in Marabo or Nyankunde by bike.

There were a few tailors, carpenters, and bicycle repairmen in the village but no full time specialists.

This village was situated behind a swift river from the direction of Nyankunde-Marabo with a shaky vine bridge for crossing the river. For a few years, there had been a car bridge over the river but it was washed away with a flood. Therefore, one could say that the village was more isolated in one direction than to the other. To the north of the village there was a narrow car-passable road to Bunia, about 45 kilometers away. People moved long distances by foot or bicycle; therefore, one cannot speak of total isolation nor total self-sufficiency of the village.

The Catholic mission started quite early in the neighborhood of Gerechabo: Baywana received its Catholic chapel and school in 1926. The majority of the Gerechabo people were Catholic, and all school children went to the Catholic school in Baywana. There were six grades, nine classes, nine teachers, and about 600 students in the school. Sometimes there were Catholic evening prayer services on the road side in Gerechabo. A Protestant chapel was built in Baywana area in 1946. In the string of 16 villages among the Babugini clan, there were eight Protestant chapels. In Gerechabo, there was a Protestant chapel in 1985, and there were about 40 adult Protestants in the village. The chapel had two pastors, who lived next to the chapel. The church elders were responsible to Nyankunde for the church work. In many cases, a Protestant person's spouse or adult children belonged to the Catholic church. There were a few Moslems in the village who attended a Moslem chapel in Baywana, built by the chief of the grouping who was Moslem himself.

Gerechabo is an example of a village which begins to have some "mixed" characteristics as a town because of the many Bira who have moved from elsewhere and because of many inhabitants belonging to other tribes. The impetus for change was a foreign owned plantation. Although not large, it nevertheless drew a large proportion of outsiders to a formerly traditional village. It changed the nature of the original village. However, the villagers remained rural in the way they obtain their livelihood from their fields.

Gerechabo is placed next to Ngbulanzabo in the folk-urban continuum because outsiders make up a larger proportion of the village than the original lineage members. Also, more Gerechabo people engage in wagework than Ngbulanzabo inhabitants due to the proximity of the foreign owned plantation. The most distinguishing feature from the other two villages is that village endogamy has become quite common. On the other hand, it still retains folk-like characteristics in that it is as isolated from larger centres by deteriorating roads as the other two villages; it is even further away from the nearest centre than the other two villages. Traditional horticultural activities are the main occupation for everyone in the village, even if engaged in wagework. Illiteracy is more common than literacy among the population. There is no school in the village, although there is one in the neighboring village.

## Nyankunde

### A Protestant Mission Station

Nyankunde, a Protestant mission station, is situated in the land of the Andisoma clan, the same clan to which the Sezabo people belong. While Sezabo is situated in one end of the string of villages belonging to this clan, Nyankunde is situated in the other end. Andisoma includes also people who lived on the other side of the mountain range all the way to Bogoro. The population of the collectivity of Andisoma (which included people who had moved from elsewhere) was 24,255 in 1985. The population in the immediate surroundings of Nyankunde (covering nearly 15 square kilometers) mission station was then 8,500. The mission station itself had 54 missionaries, including their families and 1,900 Zaireans (Statistics by the Chief of the collectivity of Andisoma). To gain some perspective on the growth of the population, it is worth mentioning that the population of Andisoma was 4,339 in 1934, 6,882 in 1942, and 7,585 in 1956 (Banga 1985).

Since the establishment of the mission station in 1925, the surrounding area has experienced enormous growth in population. Different functions of the mission, such as schools, a hospital, and church work, have drawn people from different clans, tribes, and nationalities. The Bira remained a minority of all groups participating the Protestant activities. The Geti, Hema, Lugbara, Luru, Kakwa, etc., left their native villages and moved to the mission to work in different jobs. The Bira were not interested in professional achievement, which often seemed to be the motivation for people in joining the missions. The Bira enjoyed sociability in a relaxed athmosphere with drinking. Because the Protestant mission emphasized abstinence from alcohol, it ostracized those Bira who continued in their drinking habits. In 1985-1986, there were only five Bira families living at the mission station; several others (about 110 Bira individuals) were actively involved at the mission station, although living outside of it. Of the 23 church elders who were in charge of different functions of the local assembly and supervision of rural chapels, only two were Bira.

The mission station is divided in two parts: the CAFEZA (Communauté des Assemblées des Frères Evageliques au Zaire) side, which is run by the Plymouth Brethren missionaries, together with the local church assembly, and the medical side, called "Centre Médical Evagélique", which is run by several other missions, such as Africa Inland Mission, Conservative Baptists, Unevangelised Fields Mission, and World Evangelical Crusade, and Mission Aviation Fellowship. The former side takes care of the church functions, the latter of the medical functions. The membership of the Nyankunde assembly was 1,785 in 1985. Some of these are no longer active church goers. Although the first service each Sunday packs the church full (several thousand people), the second service, which is meant to those members who supposedly have their Christian life in order, gathers a maximum of 350 members.

CAFEZA has a primary and a secondary school (Institut Pédagogique Nyankunde) at the mission station, having 1,146 students in the former and 363 students in the latter. The office of coordination for schools is also situated here. As mentioned in connection with the Ngbulanzabo school, Nyankunde has the office for the charity organization "Compassion". There is a school of home economics for girls, whose enrollment usually fluctuates between 60 to 80 girls.

CAFEZA has a printing press, which has operated since 1942. It prints religious literature in Swahili and other Zairean languages and ships it to other Protestant organizations; it has its own monthly journal, "Neno la Imani" (The Word of Faith), with about 700 subscribers; 2,000-3,000 copies were printed of each issue in 1986. In connection with the printing press, there is a book and stationary store. Bible study courses by correspondence are offered by Emmaus school, whose office is here. A studio with equipment donated by a Swiss assembly is situated at Nyankunde. Radio programs are planned to be aired by Radio CANDIP in Bunia (see Muzi-Pela) and by the Far East Broadcasting Association in the Seyshells. Since 1975, the CAFEZA church has had a cattle raising project to help its finances. The farm is situated some ten kilometers from the station.

Besides regular Sunday services, the church offers a prayer meeting and a Bible lesson once a week each. Women have one meeting a week, and there are several choir practices during the week. The missionaries and Zairean staff of the station meet for morning prayer regularly. On Sundays, the church offers Sunday school for the children and a young people's meeting for teen agers. Sometimes Christian movies are shown to the public.

The medical side of the station is a combination of many missions, as already noted. A hospital, Centre Médical Evangélique, is equipped with 230 beds and has about ten European and Zairean doctors, a couple of dentists, and 168 nurses or other staff. Besides medical [illegible], religious services are held for the patients in the hospital.

In 1966, a nursing school was started, which had nearly 100 students in 1985-1986. In 1986, a new school of pharmacy was started in connection with the central pharmacy of the hospital. The centre of community health (Santé communautaire) financed by UNICEF is located near the hospital. The centre promotes public awareness of health and prevention of diseases by training village people in the rural area to take care of the villagers. Good drinking water wells are being developped in each village together with the inhabitants. Lessons in nutrition and basic health care are given to a couple of villagers, who then will help their fellow villagers in health matters. A moving health clinic visits villages for maternal care, infant care, and treatment of leprosy and tuberculosis. The station has an airstrip with a couple of light aircraft to fly missionaries, doctors, patients, and cargo (medicine, books) to different parts of Zaire. A mission plane arrives twice a weak from Nairobi, Kenya, transporting missionaries and their supplies between this station and Nairobi, where international flights are available. The mission station needs considerable maintenance to run smoothly. This is taken care of by a maintenance shop situated near the hospital.

The mission station is different from a traditional Bira setting. It offers modern technology and science to the Zaireans in medicine, pharmacy, printing, radio, recording, and aviation.

Airplanes take off and land several times a day. In 1984, a new hangar was built for MAF airplanes. Zaireans would gather to watch the miracle of prefabricated building and shake their heads in amazement at white men's skills. Buses bring patients from Bunia and all the way from Kisangani. Patients with their families (because families take care of feeding the patients) have increased the trade in Nyankunde market, which is now busy every day. The influx of large numbers of patients and short term outsiders has also encouraged the secular entertainment life adjacent to the mission station: bars, hotel-restaurants, brothels, shops, and video places. When one of the American doctors was leaving Zaire after almost 50 years of service, the collectivity chief emphasized in his farewell speech, that the installation of the mission hospital was responsible for the increase of thievery at Nyankunde. He expressed the truth, although this by no means had been the intention of the missionaries.

Nyankunde differs from the villages described above in that it is much larger than any of them, having over 8000 people in the same cluster, as a village-like concentration. It could be seen as a centre which draws people from the periphery and disseminates ideas and goods (including beer from the commercial centre) to the surrounding area. It is composed of people from all parts of Zaire and from abroad. Christianity,—the "great" tradition, has been brought in to impose moral order in the place of the traditional moral order. However, the new moral order is tied to the western technical order (Redfield 1953:20), which presents enormous difficulties in a heterogenous, previously kin-related society. The kin relations clash with the order based on education, specialization, and competence in a job. When a person is chosen for a job, there is a conflict between the principle of competence and his kin-relation to the ones who choose. In church affairs, matters are often seen as right or wrong in terms of one's kinship or tribal relations rather than right or wrong according to Judaeo-Christian moral standards.

There are some full-time specialists at this centre who work in a job. However, even they own fields and pay workers to grow their gardens. The mission allocates fields for each worker who lives at the station. Those who live outside the mission station have to buy their fields. If they are members of lineages native to the area, they receive fields free. The size of fields is smaller than in any of the villages, and all have to buy some of their food in addition to the home grown. Ngbulanzabo people, who sometimes stayed over night at Nyankunde, commented that Nyankunde people ate less than village people and went hungry.

Of the 25 Bira families studied, only five lived at the station. Others lived outside of it on their lineage land or on land obtained through relations to native Bira to the area. Some of the members of these families hoed fields; some had excess food for sale during harvest time, but not as regularly as people living in the villages. There was not enough land to be left fallow long enough to gain strength, which was done regularly in the villages. No fertilizers were used, but crop rotation was. There was a tendency for women to take a larger part in hoeing fields than men, because more men held jobs at the mission. In some families, but not in all, men used their annual vacation time for cultivation work. The children were generally said to take part in hoeing, at least during their vacation time. When one compares this mission station to Muzi-Pela, Nyankunde inhabitants were more dependent on their fields than those of the former. When compared to the villages, the land shortage was more accute at Nyankunde.

All Bira women studied had an additional way of making money: petty trade by selling bread, barbecued meat, banana-manioc cakes, tomatoes (bought in Bunia), mangoes (seasonal), corn flour, sugar, potatoes, etc. Women had to buy in bulk and sell in retail. Prostitution was a lucrative business for women at the Nyankunde commercial centre, but no church members were expected to engage in it. The men of these Bira families were mostly employed by the mission, but some lived by growing coffee, eucalyptus, or off their gardens. Several Bira families belonged to the organization "Cooperative des petits planteurs des cafés" to gain security in their enterprise of growing coffee for sale.

The Bira families studied were (or had been) active in Protestant church life. In number of church members, the Bira were not prominent, nor did they hold prominent positions, with a few exceptions. They did not explain this by lack of education but, instead, by not belonging to the dominating groups, who were not Bira. This showed that the Bira did not grasp the new order but were in their minds still tied to the kin-ordered society.

In summary, Nyankunde is a centre of diffusion in learning, religion, medicine, and trade. People usually come to the station to get the benefits of each activity. The trade is, however, a two-way process: rural people bring in products from their fields and buy the commercial goods at the centre. It is a larger community than any of the villages and it is a mixture of tribes, even more so than Gerechabo. These characteristics refer to urban communities. However, it is a rural society in that most people obtain the main bulk of their food from their gardens, either by hoeing them themselves or by paying workers. It is urban in the sense that there are few garden products left for sale after family consumption and women have to find other economic means to support their families. Furthermore, it is urban in that there are some full time specialists. It is a mixed folk-urban society confused by whether to classify people on the basis of kin, preferably, or on some other basis. Nyankunde is placed in the middle of the folk-urban continuum because its characteristics include folk and urban attributes, about equally.

## Muzi-Pela

### A Catholic Mission Station

When Muzi-Pela, then called Muzi-Maria, was established in its present location in 1914, it was situated in a quiet area with Bira villages around it. In 1985, it was a section of the city of Bunia which was established after the Catholic mission started there in 1912, and had grown since then to a city of about 58,200 inhabitants, including about 1,100 foreigners by 1985, (according to the official

Zone of Bunia statistics). Bunia did not give the impression of a big city. It had an airport with a "tarmac" runway, where Douglas DC-3 and Cessna airplanes landed. Most businesses in town were situated along the main street, which was the only paved street and ran through the town. There were two busy markets in town. Muzi-Pela had its own market place. In addition to Muzi-Pela, there was another Catholic centre in town, called Nyakasanza.

The population of Muzi-Pela itself was 6,400 in 1985, of whom about 65% were thought to be Bira (according the chief's office). At the same time, there were 14 foreign priests and six foreign sisters living at the station. Other foreigners in other projects lived in another section of the station and numbered 51 (with their families).

Muzi-Pela was a spacious mission station bordered by two rivers, one of which is the same Shari river which flows through the Bira area south of Bunia. Bira people belonging to the lineage of Bandibakodu, which belonged to Babilamba sub-clan and Bokwe clan, lived on the land where the mission was established. They had to relocate their village outside the mission borders. In the beginning, the mission decided who could live at the mission station. Now that the station was part of the city, it had a secular leader, "chef de quartier", and a mission leader, "le cure" who was in charge of the mission. Under the chief were the chiefs of avenues who were in charge of their neighborhoods.

At the centre of the mission, a cathedral was built on one side of an open area. Near by were the living quarters of the nine priests and six brothers, a book store, a stationary story, the office of school coordination, warehouses, and a food store for religious personel. Further away were the living quartiers of six "White Sisters" and near them those of 64 Zairean sisters, novices, and postulates. One of the Zairean sisters was in charge of an orphanage with about 20 children. The Catholic church took over the care of orphaned children, a responsibility which traditionally belonged to lineages but which was not always fulfilled in an artificially created locality. A centre for young people's retreat and a "Grand Séminaire" were also situated at the mission station, the seminary having 97 abbeys. (The figures were given to me by the chief's office.)

In the following, the years of the establishments are taken from Osiel (1983) unless otherwize stated. The numbers of students attending each school during the school year of 1985 to 1986 was obtained from the principal of each school.

Medical work has been part of the activities of the Catholic mission. A former centre for leprosy, financed by Germany, reduced its operation in 1985 due to the departure of the only specialized doctor, but it is still being supervised by visits from Nyankunde medical centre. "Village Hans Reinhardt", started in 1966, had 15 beds and a dispensary for out-patients. A Catholic dispensary was established as early as 1929 (Malherbe 1976). Several miles away, but still at Muzi-Pela, a general hospital, now run by the government, was established in 1957. The hospital was equipped with 337 beds.

Muzi-Pela had several schools, some of which are now run by the government. The elementary school for boys, started in 1928, had 707 students; the elementary school for girls, started in the same year, had 648 girls enrolled in classes in 1985-1986. A secondary school for girls called "Lycée Kigonze", started in 1944, had 275 students in 1985-1986, a mixed secondary school "Insitut Ujio wa Heri" (which started as a school for carpentry and black-smithing in 1928) had 358 students in 1985-86, and another secondary school, called "Institut d'application" (IDAP) attached to the teachers' training institution, had 378 students enrolled. "Institut Supérieur Pédagogic", started in 1968 under the name "Ecole Normale Moyenne", is now a part of Zairean university network. US-Aid financed the buildings in the campus. The school had 222 students in 1979-80. In addition to a secondary school, the college was attached to a nursery "Les Petits Poussins de l'ISP" and a radio station, called CANDIP (Centre d'Animation et de Diffusion Pédagogique). CANDIP was founded in 1974 with national and Belgian help and started its first broadcasting programs in 1977. By 1986, it broadcasted in French and in eight Zairean languages, including Swahili which the Bira listened to. Its purpose was to educate people in various areas of life, e.g., in raising cattle, driving a car, women's issues, sciences, etc. When living in villages, I observed that CANDIP was a popular station everywhere.

Activity at the mission station was centered around the cathedral. There were daily prayer services in it, funerals and weddings. On Sundays, there were four services in three languages (in Swahili, French, and Latin). Church celebrations followed the church calendar. Cathechism classes were taught daily by the Zairean sisters, and several choirs practiced during the week. Movies were occasionally shown to large audiences in the retreat centre, and ISP put on a live drama production once a year. During school hours there were over two thousand school children at the station. At the time of the field work, men of the families living at the station were working under avenue chiefs digging ditches for a water pipe and well system financed by a foreign aid project to obtain good drinking water for the entire Muzi-Pela population.

The Zairean population living at the station went about their daily activities. Some of them went to work in town and some worked for the missionaries at the station; others did not have a job. Although being drunk was considered a great sin by the Catholic church, alcoholic beverages were the best sale item among the Bira. All Bira ladies whom I interviewed at the station brewed beer or distilled liquor for sale as an addition to their husbands' income or as the sole income of the family. When calculating how much money the ladies made from their beer or liquor sales, it was between 700 ($11) and 2000 zaires ($32) a month, depending how many bottles they managed to fill. Sometimes distilling did not succeed, and the cost of ingredients was lost; other times one distilling would yield up to 20 bottles. They usually distilled twice a week. Their income was comparable or better than, for instance, a nurse's or an elementary school teacher's wage at the general hospital, where one of the Bira women worked. She made $13 a month. Unsurprisingly, nurses and teachers also distilled liquor to add to the family income.

All families studied owned or had access to fields, but the use of the fields varied from one family to another. Some families worked hard in the fields, eating daily from them; others, although the minority, had nothing planted in them at the time of field work. Many adults complained that their adolescent sons refused to work in the fields, but some other adolescent sons worked in the fields with great pride. Those young men who refused the field work looked for work in town (unsuccessfully) or went to dig gold with groups of other young men. The situation concerning the use and yield of the garden products was about the same as at the Protestant mission station.

The language spoken in most Bira households was Kibira except in those with mixed marriages, whose language was Swahili. Swahili was widely spoken in public communication, and at school, of course. Housing was varied. Most Bira studied lived in mud huts. Tin roofs were common. Very few families lived in brick buildings.

The Muzi-Pela inhabitants had fragmented kin relations. In the place of traditional lineages, they had created a new system of support for each other. They called it "cooperative". A large number of households of a neighborhood had joined together and given a few zaires each into a common cashier. When someone of the member families died and needed funeral rituals, his or her household was given money from the common cash. I observed a large funeral feast, organized with the help of the cooperative. The organization was meticulous. For instance, when each guest brought dishes, these were numbered and the number and family name recorded, so that the right dishes would be found among hundreds of dishes at the end of the feast.

On the folk-urban continuum, Muzi-Pela could be marked further towards urban side than Nyankunde because it is larger and also belongs to the city of Bunia with a population of about 60,000. There are more western institutions at Muzi-Pela than at Nyankunde to bring literacy, specialization, and the "great" tradition. Both mission stations are composed of heterogenous populations. However, the two stations have elements of traditional order, because, in the vicinity of the station, where close ties are still kept, people order themselves on the basis of the traditional lineage and clan system. This system is, however, more fragmented at Muzi-Pela than at Nyankunde. In spite of shared qualities of the two mission stations, Muzi-Pela is further away than Nyankunde from the folk end of the continuum. It is urban, but not as extremely so as Goma, which is the most urban community studied.

## Goma

Goma is situated about 370 kilometers south of Bunia on the north shore of the lake Kivu. It was started by the colonial powers as a post leading to a game reserve, Parc Albert (now Parc Virunga) some 100 kilometers to the north, and as a resort place overlooking the lake. The first government administrator came to Goma in 1953, according to an old man who witnessed it happen. Those foreigners who lived in Goma before the independence remembered Goma as a beautiful, well kept resort town, together with Gisenyi, a town just across the border to Rwanda about a mile from Goma. (Before independence there was no border, since Rwanda also belonged to the Belgian domain.)

In 1985, Goma had a population of about 120,000 people, according to the zone statistics. There were about 1,200 foreigners in the city. The area was originally populated by the Hunde tribe, but today the largest tribal groups of people in Goma, according to popular opinion, are Nandes or Rwandese. The Rwandese are considered political refugees. Bira people were a tiny minority in the city; in 1981, there were 27 Bira adults in Goma. The number has fluctuated somewhat because some Bira moved away and some moved in, and several individuals have died. If Bira individuals and their spouses, who were most often non-Bira, and their children were added up, some 100 people in Goma had Bira ties.

Goma did not give the impression of being a big city. There were only two streets paved: one ran from the international airport to the city lake shore, about six kilometers, and another one from the Rwanda border through the shopping section of the city. In 1981, the biggest companies provided were the transport company TMK (542 employees), a coffee factory OZACAF (Office Zairois de Café, 346 employees) Air Zaire (255 employees), and another air charter company, Domaine de Katale (173 employees). The number of employees fluctuated greatly over the years, a fact typical of all businesses in Zaire. For an example of this, a tea factory could be cited. In 1978, it had 213 employees, in 1981, only 66. OZACAF, mentioned above, had 1,095 employees in 1975; in 1981, the number had dropped by two thirds (Warkentin 1985). There was a post office, a zone administrative centre, a regional administrative centre, a military police office, and a court room in town. Until 1985, there had been two hospitals in the city in addition to private dispensaries, but during field work a new big hospital was being built with foreign aid. There were about ten major hotels in the centre of town, countless small ones scattered around the slums, and one really big one outside the city.

There were three major market places in town. The location of the downtown market place had been changed several times because of building projects going on. It was characteristic of Goma that European vegetables were grown in the mountains outside of the city. Farmers of these areas brought their products for sale in the Goma market twice a week, providing food for the bigger hotels and the European population of the town. The stores were stocked with dairy products, cheese, butter, cream, and yogurt from the farms in surrounding mountains. However, the majority of the population could not afford to purchase these products. A large portion of the city inhabitants were engaged in more or less illegal trade between Rwanda and Zaire, since the border is within a walking distance. Smuggling coffee by crossing the lake from Zaire to Rwanda was common as well. Smuggling is a game played between customs officials and the inhabitants.

Electricity and running water have been a problem in the city for years. There were unexpected cuts in supply of both, sometimes for several days. This unreliability proved to be a health hazard in 1978 when a cholera epidemic swept through the city. However, by 1985, a power line had been built from Bukavu, a city some 200 kilometers south of Goma. Now regular electricity ensures regular pumping of water from Lake Kivu to various parts of the city. Although the houses in the centre and in the district of better housing have electricity and running water, the inhabitants in large areas of town have to fetch their water from pay taps which have long waiting lines. Sometimes fights occur concerning the order of line-up.

The geographical region is volcanic. The ground is black volcanic ash and rock. There are several active volcanos which erupt every few years. The inhabitants of Goma live under a constant threat of a volcanic eruption and worry about it. In 1977, a volcano erupted towards the city. Although only its outskirts were destroyed by hot lava, panic seized the whole city. People were escaping carrying their most precious possessions: tin roofing and doors. About 75 people were killed by lava or its poisonous fumes. Since then there have been several eruptions but lava has flowed toward uninhabited regions. During the field work, there was again a threat. Bandits took the opportunity to create havoc in the city, using the excuse of an eruption to blow up an electric transformer house.

The inhabitants of Goma viewed not only the volcanos as dangerous but also the lake, which the city borders. It was believed that a mermaid lived in the lake who caught bathing people, sucked their blood and brains out, and abandoned the bodies on the shore after a few days.

There were also other dangers. It was common that houses were broken into at night and all valuables stolen. A Bira woman who had borrowed a sewing machine lost it at night and had to pay the price to the owner. Another Bira woman had a cut in her head; a third woman lost half a dozen teeth when bandits broke into her house and beat her. Bandits were not only gangs of young, robust men but also soldiers. Their banditry was committed under the pretext of law enforcement. It happened over and over that soldiers arrested men in their own yard for not carrying their identity cards. After arrest, they would beat the men badly if they offered no bribes. Recovery from such beatings sometimes took months.

Most Bira belonged to the poverty stricken part of the population in Goma. Unemployment was common among them. Even though there was work at times, the wages did not cover the actual cost of living. Women tried to add to the family income. As in Muzi-Pela, in the late 1970's, most Bira women distilled liquor and sold it either to a bar or privately in their homes. This type of activity has been reported elsewhere in urban Africa, e.g., in West Africa (Southall 1961:50). Several Bira women have been arrested or fined for this illegal activity. For fear of similar hardships in the future, some women changed their activity into legal channels, such as weaving and selling baskets, charcoal, flour, or sugar. However, Bira commonly stated that no other trade was as profitable as liquor.

The Bira in Goma would have liked to grow fields for their livelihood but there was not much land available. On the edges of their city lots, they could grow some beans or squash, but it did not amount to much in their food supply. Some families had bought a small piece of land for gardens, or had relatives or friends who let them use a piece of land for gardening. In 1979, twenty families in both Goma and in the village of Ngbulanzabo were timed in their gardening activities over a certain time period. This investigation showed very clearly that urban people did not use much time for gardening: the rural women used an average of four hours twelve minutes a day for cultivation while urban women used forty minutes. Rural men used four hours eighteen minutes while urban men used five minutes (Warkentin 1985). This shows the vast difference in the importance of fields for the livelihood. It will be shown in the following chapters that the fields or lack of them had a great impact on obtaining bridewealth. The rural families could rely on their fields to get cash to buy livestock, while urban families did not have this possibility.

The difficulty in obtaining bridewealth in an urban environment, then, influenced the relationships of parents to their children in the most important duty in Bira eyes, namely the duty of the parents to give wives to their sons. There was a marked difference in attitudes of rural and urban children towards hoeing gardens: the rural children took pride in doing it and used to go to the gardens regularly, while the Goma children could not be bothered by such work. However, it is remarkable that this attitude could be changed by moving to another area, as demonstrated by one family. When making a livelihood in Goma became increasingly difficult, a widower of a Bira woman left the city with his children. Their new location was in Komanda, not far from the Bira area. The man prepared and planted fields with the help of his children, who now took pride in this work.

Rural Bira lived in mud huts with thatched roofs; the Bira in Goma lived in houses built of various materials, and the houses were in various conditions. Some lived in hovels, ready to collapse any time. Three houses of Bira families literally did collapse. One of them was a mud hut which collapsed in the middle of a night. Squeaking sounds gave an alarm to the family of nine to get out in time. A wall of another house built of brick but cemented by mud collapsed while a family was in it, but nobody was hurt. A wall of the third house, built of rocks, cemented with mud, collapsed during the day, but no one was harmed. Most of the houses were not in much better condition. Several Bira were wanting to repair their houses but did not have money to do so. Only one family lived in a European style house with a tile roof.

To a western observer, sanitary conditions were not good in the densely populated slums where most Bira lived. Stench was strong coming from uncovered holes of outhouses, open garbage heaps, and a large butcher's place. Swarms of flies and scavanger birds were common. In addition, there was considerable infestation of rats and mice. The Bira claimed that rats as big as dogs would come to their houses and take cutlery and clothes lying on the floor. Rural Bira looked at urban Bira as people living with hunger, since they had no fields to fall back on, and wages could not cover living expenses.

In spite of the fact that the urban Bira seem to be well adapted in their habitat, I believe that the stressful life has influenced their enormous intake of alcoholic beverages. Although Bira have a reputation for heavy drinking, I observed more drinking in Goma than in the rural areas or mission stations. It may be that urban Bira feel more compelled to drink every day in order to cope with life. Furthermore, alcoholic drinks are given to children and babies more often in the urban setting. "Give her some joy", said a mother, as if the life was joyless without it. I observed a toddler being weaned with liquor, and saw many children drunk while adults joked about it. My view was supported by a Bira man who, having recently moved from the tribal area, commented spontaneously on the alcohol use in Goma. He said that it was used much more in the latter than in the former area.

In 1979, all Bira living in Goma, except one, were Catholics. The one Bira was a Moslem, because she had married a Moslem, although she had grown up as a Catholic. By 1985, there were three more Protestants. A young couple, whose wife was Bira, had changed from Catholics to Protestants, because the husband's family elsewhere had done so first. One Bira man had married a girl who belonged to a "Mungu Mwema" religious group, which was an indigenous application of Protestant faith. Otherwise, everyone was Cathclic.

There was a large Catholic mission, a Conservative Baptist mission, and a Swedish Pentecostal mission in town. An Anglican mission and a Seventh Day Adventist mission had no missionaries any more in town, although they did elsewhere in the country. Each of these missions had numerous churches and chapels in town. In addition, there were Islamic, Jehovah's Witnesses, "Mungu Mwema" and Kimbanguist churches (see Chapter One: Colonialism and Modernization). In addition, there were several non-denominational government schools. The Bira sent their children to these schools depending on conditions other than religious doctrine or level of teaching, such as school fees, distance, or availability of room in schools. Most Bira attended church services of their denomination quite regularly, some more often than others.

The Bira people in Goma had married spouses from other tribes (See Table 2 and 3). Therefore, they did not use Kibira at home and their children did not know it. The children grew up with Swahili as their mother tongue. As most tribes were patrilineal, the tribal affiliation of the children was reckoned through the father. Thus some of those children whom I regarded as being Bira for my study, were not regarded as Bira by the rest of the community.

The number of the Bira in the population of Goma was extremely small, and Bira recognized their local minority status. Very few Bira had true relatives in Goma, but they used close kin terms to each other to create an athmosphere of security. They no longer viewed themselves as Bira alone, but they were included in a larger unit of all those people who had immigrated to Goma from Northeastern Zaire and from the district of Kisangani. Other tribes from that area were Lendu, Hema, Lese, Nyali, Logo, Luru, Lugbara, Kakwa, Bwa, and Azande. "We are Ituri people" or "we are Kisangani people", they said. Each Bira would know those people in his neighborhood and felt closer ties to them than to the people from Goma area or other parts of Zaire. If a calamity met one of Kisangani people, the other Kisangani people were expected to go and comfort the family. If a person was thrown into a prison, the other Kisangani people were expected to work together in raising enough money to free him. When a Bira woman died at the age of 52, a huge crowd of Kisangani people gathered to mourn her. For children's feasts, such as name giving, a smaller crowd came together, this time more exclusively Bira. However, the boundaries of the group of Kisangani people were not very clear. Not everyone knew each other, not even all Bira. Also, every Bira had other tribes as their neighbors and, therefore, developed friendly relationships with these people. Some Bira had friendly associations with their neighbors for pooling money in a fashion described also in some cities in West Africa (Little 1957). Each family belonging to the association contributed monthly a fixed sum, and the total was given to one family at a time. In addition, church affiliations and job relations encouraged friends from other tribes.

Many Bira talked about their old country as a perfect place; many wished to go back there, but few actually returned, mainly because of the great expense of travelling. The travel fare in a bus for a whole family would have been higher than a month's wages. Some were able to travel free through family ties with truck drivers. However, not many moved back to their old country. Some women, especially, had escaped their marital homes in Bira country to Goma and knew that their return would be calling vengeance upon themselves. Most of the Bira accepted their lot of staying in Goma as the will of God.

In summary, description has shown that Goma was furthest away, in several senses, from traditional village life. It was geographically far from the Bira tribal area. Systematic questioning revealed that there were no lineage groups among the Bira of Goma. Tables 4 and 5 show that the parents interviewed had no lineage or clan relatives. There was no traditional group solidarity in the city as there was in villages, although Bira tried to unite with other people from northeastern Zaire to produce intertribal sentiment. Although there were no formal ethnic associations, there were some friendly neighborhood associations for pooling money. Goma was the most heterogenous community of the six studied. The tribal language, a sign of tribal identity, was fading away. Instead, Swahili had taken its place at home and in public. The livelihood in Goma was almost entirely alienated from fields, and people could not practice their traditional horticulture. They were also alienated from the wilderness which in rural conditions would provide them with building material for a house. Most Bira in Goma lived in poor conditions. Specialization and literacy were preferred in Goma in the job market, but not all men were qualified and even fewer women. Every Bira man tried to find wagework (Table 1), and every Bira woman had at one time distilled liquor for sale. Goma was the largest urban centre of this study, making it the urban end of the rural-urban continuum. The moral order of the rural communities had here changed into the technical order of the city, which was often demonstrated to the Bira quite harshly. Although Bira tried to cope with severe urban life with their inherent joviality, it was clear that they lived under enormous stress in which liquor was perceived as giving temporary relief.

## Comparison of the Localities and Their Regional Context

In this section I will compare the localities I chose as my field work bases. The examination of one index of urbanization at a time in each locality will help to explain the positions established on the folk-urban continuum.

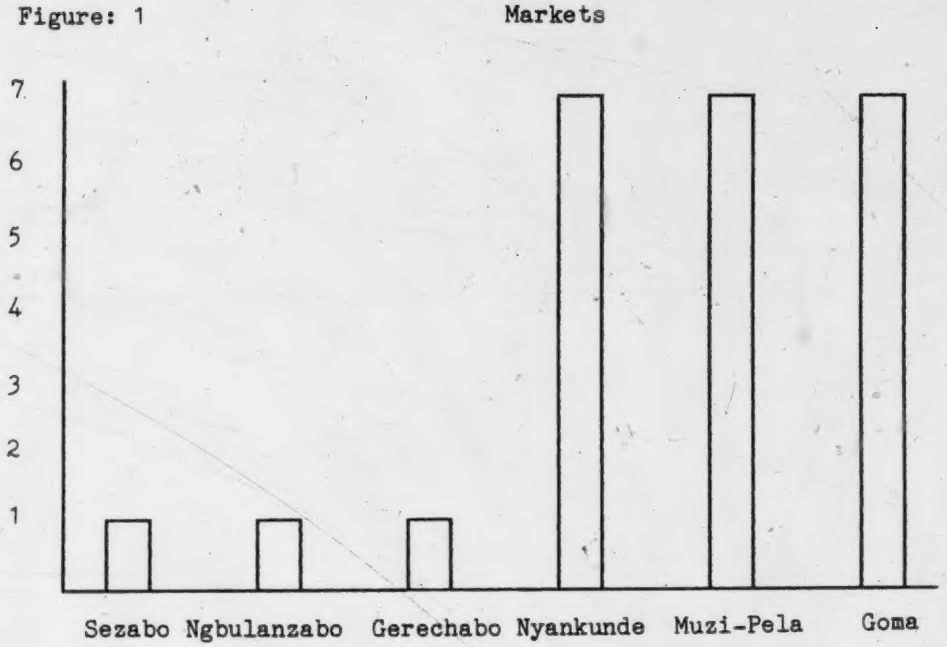
Nyankunde and Muzi-Pela were centres in the Bira area from which learning and ideas diffused to villages. They also drew people from large areas to the religious work opportunities, as patients to their hospitals and as students to their schools. These centres were important as consumers of village garden products. Certain families at Ngbulanzabo had a special contract with the mission schools at Nyankunde for food production. Women from Sezabo, Nyankunde, and less regularly from Gerechabo carried their garden products to Nyankunde market place for sale. This busy place not only sold to local clients but also to those middle-men who came from Bunia to buy there and sell at the city market. At times, especially during the mango seasons, women from Nyankunde (rarely from other villages) travelled to Bunia, and some even further to the mines, to sell mangos. As mentioned in connection with Sezabo and Ngbulanzabo, the market place at Talolo drew large crowds of people, including those from Sezabo, Ngbulanzabo, and Nyankunde, to buy products from Geti (southern Lendu), the most popular item being fish from Lake Albert (or Lake Mobutu). Some Muzi-Pela women traded in fish, travelling regularly between Kasenyi and Bunia.

The inhabitants of the three villages could also choose another small centre for their medical, religious (Catholic), and education needs, namely Badya, which was a Catholic mission station founded in 1944. This station was in charge of the surrounding churches, including those of the research villages. However, its influence did not reach that of Muzi-Pela and Nyankunde.

Figure 1 shows the types of markets available in each research location. Each of the three villages had one market day a week, although occasional visits to the daily markets of larger centres were made. These trips demanded a special effort and a long walk. The three other locations had established regular markets seven days a week. In this index of urbanization, the communities are divided in two patterns.

The importance of agricultural fields in the livelihood of the Bira in different localities is the next variable. The people of the three villages worked regularly in their fields to obtain their daily livelihood from them, and there was enough for sale to bring income for daily needs of "luxury" items (soap, tea, sugar) and clothing. In most cases, fields were used as a resource for bridewealth of the sons of the family. The importance of fields in the lives of the people in the three other locations was diminishing due to culture contact. The fields at Nyankunde were important in everyday consumption, but very few families had extra field products to sell. In Muzi-Pela, the trend was in the direction of lesser importance of fields. Some families, although only few, did not grow any fields. As a whole, fields were used for daily consumption, but often it was necessary to buy more food at the market in addition to the home grown. In Goma, no families had enough fields to take care of their entire food consumption. Only few families had a small plot which gave temporary help for family food. In the variable of fields, Nyankunde can be placed in the middle of the continuum, with the three villages occupying the folk-end and

Figure: 1



1 Market once a week.
7 Market seven days a week.

the two cities the urban end.

The value given to wagework by families in the six communities followed the folk-urban continuum. Sezabo and Ngbulanzabo had the least amount of wagework. Occasionally, a person may have worked for wages in hoeing the gardens for another one to obtain cash for a special need. Only a couple of people were engaged in sewing clothes for the other villagers. At Gerechabo, in addition to the features present in the other two villages, several people were engaged as workers at the foreign owned plantation. At Nyankunde, most people desired jobs at the mission station or at the commercial centre. When the jobs were not available, they may have had other means of livelihood such as trading or growing eucalyptus and coffee for sale. In Muzi-Pela and Goma, all men desired a job. If it was not available, then they started their own trade, such as smuggling hallucinatory leaves (in Goma), gold trade, or patching or making kitchen ware. In the Bira families studied at Nyankunde, Muzi-Pela, and in Goma, there were one or two women in each who worked in occupations which required some training, one as a bank teller, the others as teachers.

The engagement in wagework by at least one member of the families interviewed reflects the trend described (Table 1). The communities were arranged in the continuum from the most rural (Sezabo) to the most urban (Goma), following the explanation in the previous sections. There is a steady increase for engagement in wagework by more families as the communities get more urban, from 0% at Ngbulanzabo and 13% at Sezabo to 91% in Goma. Cramer's V (0.67) shows that there is an association between wagework and urban

Table 1. Wagework Engaged in by at least One Member of the Families Interviewed.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulanzabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| No wagework | 13<br>87% | 15<br>100% | 10<br>67% | 7<br>28% | 4<br>16% | 1<br>9% |
| Wagework | 2<br>13% | - | 5<br>33% | 18<br>72% | 21<br>84% | 10<br>91% |

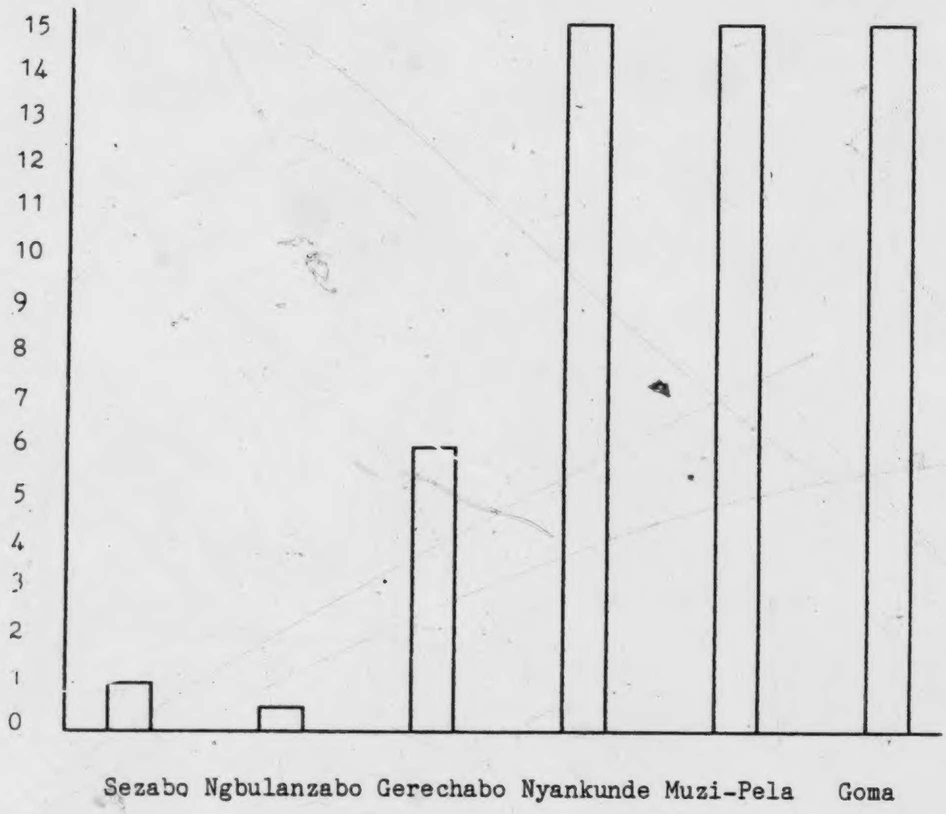
(Cramer's V 0.67)

residence, which, of course, is not surprising.

Figure 2 shows the kind of shops available in each community. Ngbulanzabo had no shops, only home selling of palm oil and petrol. Sezabo had one shop, Gerechabo about half a dozen shops. The three other communities had fifteen or more shops. In the index of shops, the communities are divided in two: Nyankunde, Muzi-Pela, and Goma fall on the urban end of the continuum, while the villages follow each other at the folk-end: Sezabo, Ngbulanzabo, and Gerechabo.

The presence of Western religious institutions as representatives of the "great" tradition varied between the communities of field work. Gerechabo had a Protestant chapel in the community, and a Catholic chapel in the neighboring village at the distance of about a mile. Sezabo had both a Protestant and a Catholic chapel in the village. Ngbulanzabo had a stronger influence from the Protestant mission, having a Bible school in the village since 1982. Nyankunde and Muzi-Pela were dominated by the Protestant or the Catholic mission respectively. Outside the Protestant mission boundary, there was a Catholic church at the Nyankunde commercial centre. Equally, not far from the border of Muzi-Pela, there was a Protestant church being built. Goma had missions of both denominations, but these missions were not dominant in respect to the total city: People were free to follow or forsake the mission rules. At the mission stations, they had to follow the rules or move elsewhere. In respect to the "great" tradition the villages could be arranged in order of the least to the most: Gerechabo, Sezabo, Ngbulanzabo, Goma, Nyankunde, and Muzi-Pela. The order of the

Figure: 2 Shops in Communities



| | |
|---|---|
| 0 | No shops. |
| 0.5 | Some home selling. |
| 1 | One shop. |
| 6 | Six shops. |
| 15+ | Fifteen or more shops. |

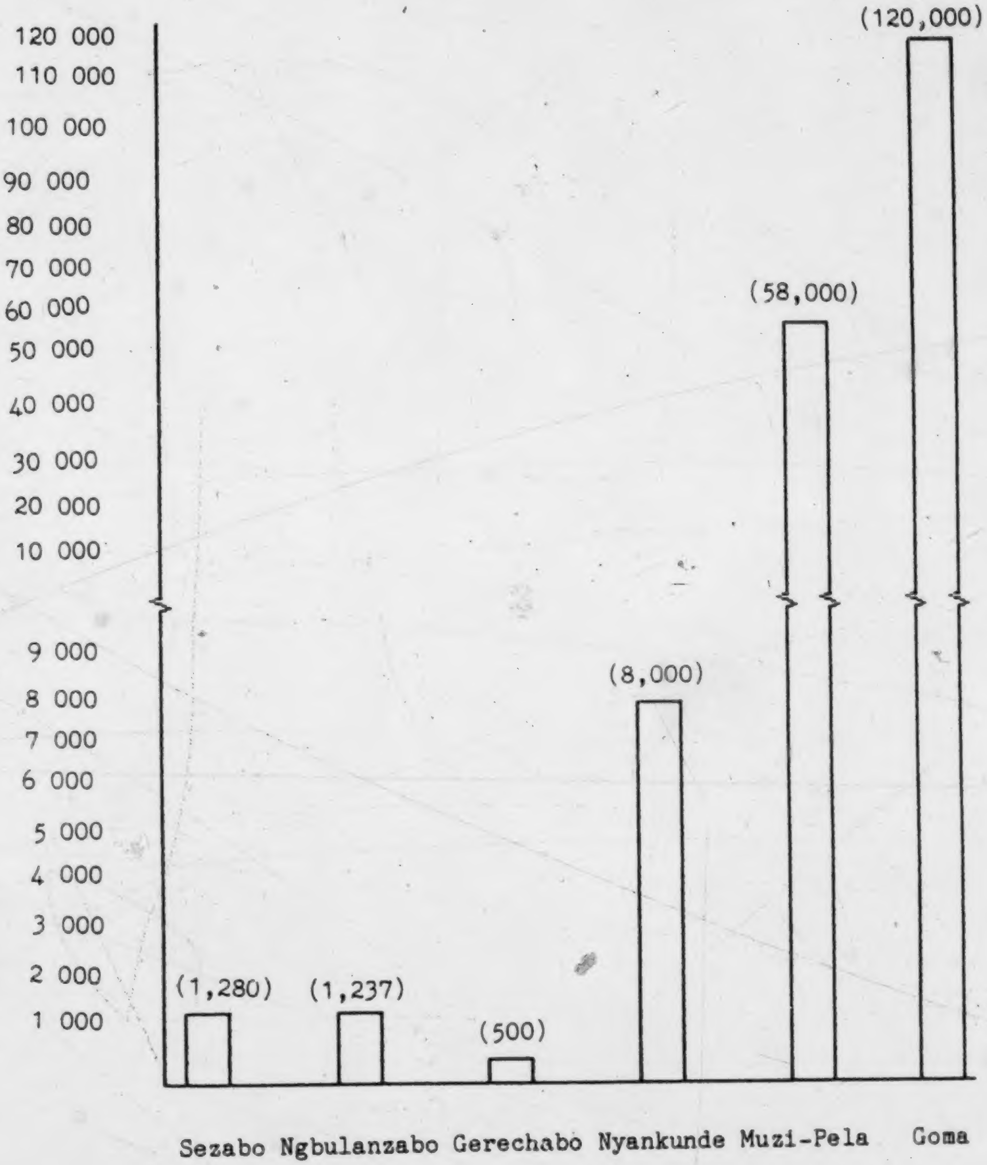
continuum is here different from previous ones. This indicates that Christianity cannot be fully equated with overall urbanization, because the biggest city, Goma, is not under the most Christian influence and the most traditional village in many other aspects, namely Sezabo, is not under the least Christian influence.

Western medical services divided the communities into two groups: The three villages were similar in that they had no dispensary in their own village but had to go to a neighboring village for medicine. A retired nurse from Nyankunde was building a dispensery at Ngbulanzabo and was planning to open it soon (in 1987). Each of these villages had access to modern medicine; Ngbulanzabo in its own locality, the other villages in their neighboring communities, to a bi-monthly visiting medical team for maternity and infant care, and treatment of leprosy and tuberculosis. Gerechabo and Ngbulanzabo had government maternity posts in their neighboring village, and Sezabo was planning to have one in the future. The other three localities were similar in that they had a variety of Western medical services available to them. Western medical services fall into two groups, with Nyankunde, Muzi-Pela and Goma on the urban side and the three villages on the folk-side.

The educational possibilities vary in the localities under study. Gerechabo had no school in the community, and its children had to walk to the neighboring village (a mile) for school. Sezabo and Ngbulanzabo had an elementary school in the community. The other three communities also had secondary schools. Goma offered no education beyond the secondary school. Nyankunde offered the possibility for nurses' and pharmacists' training. Only one of the localities, Muzi-Pela, had a teachers' training college affiliated with the Zairean universities. According to this variable, the order of the villages in the folk-urban continuum is: Gerechabo, Ngbulanzabo, Sezabo, Goma, Nyankunde, and Muzi-Pela.

Figure 3 presents the population sizes of the field work communities. I have presented the populations of the villages as such, because they were distinct units although belonging to a string of villages. Goma was also a distinct unit with clear borders. However, Muzi-Pela and Nyankunde were different matters. Although the borders of the missions were formally marked, I felt that the missions drew people into a large cluster of population (also outside the mission boundaries). Because Muzi-Pela had developed into a section of the city of Bunia, I have presented the population of the whole city. Many people living in Muzi-Pela worked in the city, had relatives in various sections of the city, and visited markets and shops in the city. The population figures for Nyankunde, as also in the popular use of the name, include not only the mission station but the population cluster adjacent to it (with localities called "Centre de Negoce", Gambili, Magimba, and Talolo). There was continuous interaction between the mission station and these localities: those living at the mission station went daily to the market and shops of the commercial centre. On the other hand, those living in the population cluster around the mission station attended church functions and the hospital at the mission station. Visiting patients in the hospital was a regular activity for those living near by. Patients who lived in

Figure: 3 Population Sizes of Research Communities



far-away villages would often board with relatives living near the mission station. The population figures for the actual mission stations have been given in the description of the respective stations.

Sezabo and Ngbulanzabo had a little over a thousand inhabitants, Gerechabo half of that. Nyankunde had some 8,000, Bunia 58,000, and Goma, the largest of the communities, had 120,000 inhabitants. The communities fall in the following order: Gerechabo, Ngbulanzabo, Sezabo, Nyankunde, Bunia, Goma.

We see the steady process of change in respect to the composition of localities. Sezabo is the most traditional, in that the basis of the village was traditional lineages. It had very few newcomers from outside in particular occupations such as teachers, salesmen, and church workers. Traditional lineage heads were in charge of the lineages, and a chosen "artificial" head was in charge of those people who have moved from outside. Ngbulanzabo had a solid traditional lineage structure, but it had also had a large number of new comers from outside in recent years. The village was governed, like Sezabo, by lineage heads and chosen leaders for those who had moved in from outside. The proportion of the latter group was larger than that of Sezabo. Gerechabo had even larger proportion of outsiders than original people belonging to the traditional lineages of the village. The administration was otherwise similar to that of the other two villages.

The mission side of Nyankunde was composed totally of outsiders, including foreigners, by the thousands. The mission had a legal representative as a head. But the immediate surrounding area still has local lineages as its basis with lineage heads, although outsiders were increasingly intruding the area. The centre was divided into avenues with chiefs of avenues as their heads. The chief of the locality and the chief of the collectivity were traditionally chosen from the original inhabitants of the area. At Muzi-Pela, the traditional lineage basis had disappeared when the mission moved into the present location. The Bira people, mostly from the surrounding clans (Bokwe, Bobwa, and Sili), formed the majority (65%) of this community. People from other tribes and countries mingled with the Bira. Muzi-Pela was a city section called "quartier", and this had been divided into avenues with chiefs of avenues as their heads. The chief of the "quartier" was not a Bira. Goma was the furthest away from the traditional village in that the vast majority of the population were newcomers to the city, and Bira formed only an extremely small proportion of other tribes. The administration was similar to that of Muzi-Pela.

With regard to community composition, the research localities fall in their places in the folk-urban continuum: Sezabo, Ngbulanzabo, Gerechabo, Nyankunde, Muzi-Pela, and Goma.

The community composition is reflected in the relationships of the families interviewed. The tribal affiliation of the spouses varied according to the location: urban locations were more likely to have couples with one non-Bira spouse than rural communities. Of the wives of the families interviewed, there was only one non-Bira wife in one of the villages; this was at Nyankunde, the Protestant mission station. More than half (6, 54%) of families interviewed in Goma, in contrast, had a non-Bira wife (Table 2). The same trend can be observed in the tribal affiliation of the husbands (Table 3): One of the families interviewed in the villages had one non-Bira husband, Nyankunde had five (20%), Muzi-Pela ten (40%), and Goma had five (45%). Cramer's V, 0.61 for wives and 0.43 for the husbands, shows that there is a relationship between the locality and the tribal affiliation of the spouses.

The presence of relatives in the same community showed a change according to the locality: the husbands (Table 4) had lineage or clan relatives mostly in the villages (60%, 93%, and 100%), at Nyankunde (68%), less (24%) at Muzi-Pela, but none in Goma. Goma (82%) and Muzi-Pela (56%) husbands had the largest proportion of miscellaneous relatives or no relatives at all, Goma (18%), Muzi-Pela (20%). Wives' relatives were also analyzed (Table 5). The traditional pattern for a woman's relatives in her marital village involves other women from her lineage and clan, who have married into the same village. A woman does not, however, usually have relatives from her own nuclear family, because her brothers and parents stay in her childhood village and her sisters usually marry elsewhere. It turned out that the vast majority of the rural women in the three villages had lineage or clan relatives from their childhood villages, while urban women (Goma and Muzi-Pela) had none. Of Nyankunde women, 48% had female lineage members in the same locality. Urban women had the largest number (Goma 54% and Muzi-Pela 37%) of nuclear family relatives (siblings, daughters' families, own parents) and none or one

Table 2. The Tribal Affiliation of the Wives of Interviewed Families in Relation to Locality.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulan-zabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bira | 15<br>100% | 15<br>100% | 14<br>93% | 24<br>96% | 25<br>100% | 5<br>45% |
| Non-Bira | - | - | 1<br>7% | 1<br>4% | - | 6<br>54% |

(Cramer's V 0.61)

Table 3. The Tribal Affiliation of the Husbands of Interviewed Families in Relation to Locality.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulan-zabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Bira | 15<br>100% | 14<br>93% | 15<br>100% | 20<br>80% | 15<br>60% | 6<br>54% |
| Non-Bira | - | 1<br>7% | - | 5<br>20% | 10<br>40% | 5<br>45% |

(Cramer's V 0.43)

Table 4. Husbands' Relatives in Different Locations.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulan-zabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Lineage or clan relatives | 15<br>100% | 14<br>93% | 9<br>60% | 17<br>68% | 6<br>24% | - |
| Miscellaneous relatives | - | - | 5<br>33% | 4<br>16% | 14<br>56% | 9<br>82% |
| No relatives | - | 1<br>7% | 1<br>7% | 4<br>16% | 5<br>20% | 2<br>18% |

(Cramer's V 0.49)

Table 5. Wives' Relatives in Different Locations.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulan-zabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Women married here | 15<br>100% | 14<br>93% | 9<br>60% | 12<br>48% | - | - |
| Miscellaneous relatives | - | 1<br>7% | 5<br>33% | 8<br>32% | 13<br>54% | 3<br>27% |
| Nuclear family | - | - | 1<br>7% | 2<br>8% | 9<br>37% | 6<br>54% |
| None or one | - | - | - | 3<br>12% | 2<br>8% | 2<br>18% |

(Cramer's V 0.48)

relative (Goma 18%, Muzi-Pela 8%, and Nyankunde 12%). A large number of wives at Muzi-Pela (54%), Gerechabo (33%), Nyankunde (32%) and Goma (27%) have miscellaneous relatives. Gerechabo is different from the other two villages in having so many wives with miscellaneous relatives and 7% nuclear family relatives. These features reflect the fact that this village is least traditional; the lineage structure of the village is outnumbered by outsiders. Thus village endogamy has become possible alongside of traditional clan exogamy and, as a consequence, a woman may have non-traditional relatives living in her marital village. The same is true of Nyankunde and the urban communities. This feature is important to marriage arrangements and parental control over children, which will be discussed later in detail. Here one might mention briefly that in communities where potential spouses live nearby, parents have less control over the choice of the spouses for their children, because children might choose for themselves.

The nature of thievery occurring in the research communities reflects the degree of moral order felt in them. The rationale would be that petty theft is not uncommon in folk-communities. If theft of valuable items occurs, it is expected only from outsiders, not from community members because the moral sentiment would bind them together. In urban centres, community members may be expected to steal from each other because there is no mutual moral binding. In extreme cases, the thieves may behave violently towards their victims.

Of the research communities, Sezabo and Ngbulanzabo have occational field thievery which was seen by the villagers as commited by community members. However, house break-ins, which were rare, were always thought of as being commited by thieves who lived elsewhere, but came to the village to steal. Gerechabo was similar to these villages except that it admitted that a thief who broke in may have been a villager. In fact, this case, said to be the first in the village history, happened while I was doing field work in the village. A particular thief, a local villager, was caught. Nyankunde, Muzi-Pela, and Goma viewed break-in thieves as part of the community. Thievery was not uncommon at Nyankunde and Muzi-Pela, but was a constant threat in Goma. Goma had extremely violent break-ins. As described in the section about Goma, several Bira individuals had been hurt in them.

Two villages, Sezabo and Ngbulanzabo, are found in the folk-end of the continuum with Gerechabo deviating from the folk-pattern, Nyankunde and Muzi-Pela as equals towards the urban end, and finally Goma with violent thievery at the urban end of the continuum. This index shows that the traditional moral order is best kept in villages while forgotten in larger centres. It has implications for child discipline: in the three larger centres of the study, some parents could not control the thieving habits of their children.

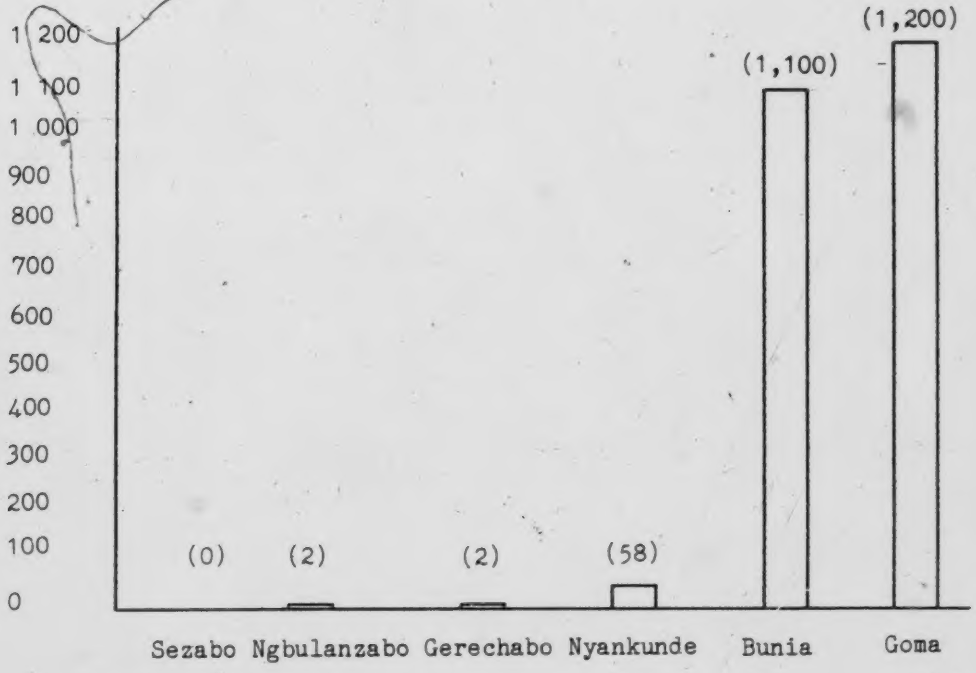
The amount of Swahili used by the Bira families is the next focus of investigation. The Bira in folk communities use Kibira as the first language; in urban communities, they use Swahili. The Bira in the four communities from Sezabo to Nyankunde learned Kibira as their first language but needed Swahili to communicate with other tribal people, in the market, at school, and at church. At Muzi-Pela, some families in mixed marriages, although the minority, used Swahili at home. Kibira was still widely understood. Goma was different in that all families used Swahili as their first language. Archaic Kibira was used among few old Bira people.

Finally, Figure 4 presents the actual numbers of foreigners in each community. The rationale would be, of course, that in a folk society there are no foreigners, while in an urban society there are a large number of them. Of the research communities, Sezabo had no resident foreigners, Ngbulanzabo had two missionaries, Gerechabo two plantation owners, Nyankunde had 58 missionaries or their offspring. Muzi-Pela and Goma had over a thousand foreign missionaries, business men, and foreign aid workers.

As a summary, one could claim that in many aspects the sample communities can be divided into two groups: the villages and the larger communities. However, sometimes the division is not as clear, but there is a continuum where Nyankunde falls in the middle. Sezabo and Goma usually represent the extremes of the continuum. When the positions of each community on the folk-urban continuum are counted variable by variable, the same order which has been presented repeatedly will emerge: Sezabo, Ngbulanzabo, Gerechabo, Nyankunde, Muzi-Pela, and Goma. The communities are presented in this order in the tables.

In Chapter Eight, facts about marital arrangements of a large number of Bira, now living in six communities, have been collected. Their marriages were conducted also outside the research communities. These locations have been mached with the research communities and

Figure: 4 Number of Foreigners in Six Communities



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fitted in the same rural-urban continuum as described above: traditional village (Sezabo), village (Ngbulanzabo), mixed village (Gerechabo), town (Nyankunde), small city (Bunia), big city (Goma).

The position of the community in the folk-urban continuum has been discussed so long, because my thesis is that this position will predict parental control over children in many areas, although not in all. This can be stated briefly here: the more rural the community, the better control the parents have over their children; the more urban the community, the less control the parents have. (Detailed analysis will follow.) The position of the community in the continuum is not dictated by the distance from centres. If it were, Gerechabo would be the most folksociety, but it is the least folk society of the villages in many respects. It appears that any Redfieldian urban characteristic introduced into a village will change its character. All urban characteristics are not equal, however, in their capacity to transform a folk society. A plantation, a hospital, and a mission are some of the more powerful institutions of change. Local chapels and schools as such do change the environment, but they are lesser agents of change because they do not involve the entrance of many outsiders to a community. The founding of a Bible school at Ngbulanzabo was a more profound agent of change.

What could be forcast to happen in the future? All the communities will be growing in numbers and likely will be more mixed with newcomers as well. It is said that with the present political administration, all Zaireans are free to move where they please. The villages almost certainly will lose more of their traditional structure. Land and firewood shortages will become more accute. Banditry will likely increase. Swahili may gain popularity over Kibira as the places become more mixed. As long as a village has some traditional lineage structure left and has fields to hoe, it can accomodate more easily than those localities which do not have these features. This factor is shown by Gerechabo. The villagers happen to have plenty of space for fields and no shortage of water or fire wood. As a consequence, they have been able to accomodate comfortably a larger number of outsiders than the original population. The outsiders respect the traditional way of life, although there have been some unavoidable changes.

The people of Ngbulanzabo have let outsiders come and do what they want in their village. Although the potential danger for environment is noticed by the community members, they do not feel that they should put limits to the influx of people in order to hoard the resources which are essential for life. As to the three larger communities, it seems to me that the Bira do not have much say in what happens in their communities. These are the communitites where people are worried about their livelihood and future, the larger the community, the more seriously so.

## Individual Variation among People of the Communities

Although the people of a community live a certain lifestyle which appears fairly homogenous, individuals carry with them a unique set of experience from their past. One aspect of the past which differentiates one from another is the amount of travel each has experienced. In the traditional past, the men were born, raised, married and died in their lineage village. A woman left her childhood home at marriage to go to her husband's village. If a husband died, she was expected to enter a leviratic marriage in the same community. This pattern was still followed in villages in 1986, but, with the colonial outreach, more people had left their villages in pursuit of education and western occupations. Some had travelled extensively and were continuing to do so. Villagers of today may have had experiences elsewhere, but many had decided to return to their childhood community in the end.

In the following, examples of individual lives are given from birth until the present time. These descriptions will give a reader an insight into personal goals and various events of individual lives. The maps will show with bold lettering, where individuals were born and, with regular lettering, in which localities they have lived. Each move to a locality is marked by a new entry of the letter representing the individual. Some have lived in a locality several times during their lives. The maps will show that rural Bira have travelled less than urban; the travel is, in fact, related to the size of the community they are now living in.

With travelling, Bira became exposed to many different traditions from their own, including the western. It may be that the further one has travelled the less he adheres to his traditions. On the other hand, one's behavior is greatly influenced by the particular locality in which one is living, through the structural and economic constraints and opportunities it presents. This theme will be elaborated in the thesis. Here we will glimpse at the individual life stories to give an idea to the reader of what was happening to the Bira after the colonial administration was established in the area.

At Ngbulanzabo, our male example is C.N.. He was born in the village about 1944. (His parents, like most others, did not record births, so this is C.N.'s own estimation of his birth.) His father died when he was half-grown, but he grew up with his father's brother and elder brother. The latter obtained a wife for him when he was 15. After his first child was born, he decided to go to Uganda with another village man. They worked at a bakery for an East-Asian business man. He had some difficulty getting used to Ugandan Swahili and the different lifestyle there. He became Protestant while in Uganda. He returned home after a few years and resumed horticulture as before. He became friends with a Protestant missionary couple at Nyankunde and learned some reading from them. He became an enthusiastic preacher and church leader in his home village, being the main driver in building a new church at Ngbulanzabo in 1975.

His wife, E.C., was born in Sezabo in about 1945. Her mother was going blind and was not able to care for her very well. So, when she was about seven years old, she went to live with her brother who had moved to Mambasa (120 kilometers west of the Bira area), and then moved to her sister who was married at Marabo. She was back in Sezabo when her family was dealing with her marital arrangements. She remembers fighting fiercely against looking at the young man, C.N., who was interested in marrying her. Her father arranged the marriage, and E.C. was brought to Ngbulanzabo. She had not menstruated yet and did not understand the sexual aspect of marriage. When her menstruation started, her father's sister, who was married at Ngbulanzabo as well, was called to explain and comfort her, as in other family crises throughout the years.

E.C. had a miscarriage at first, but, in 1961, she bore a son. After this, she was left alone when her husband disappeared to Uganda without any news. E.C. blamed her husband for abandoning her, so she lost her opportunity, which the Bira consider a right, to bear children every two years. So the western rule gave men opportunities to escape their traditional duties. She and the wife of the other villager who had gone to Uganda stuck together. They were planning to leave their marital villages to marry somewhere else when their husbands suddenly returned. E.C. continued to bear children. One son died as an infant in 1970. Altogether, she bore seven children; the last two were twins. When these were just over a year old, the younger one fell in a fire in the kitchen and had to be taken to the hospital at Nyankunde. Because she was nursing, the healthy twin also went to the hospital. While there, he contracted typhoid and died. The injured child survived.

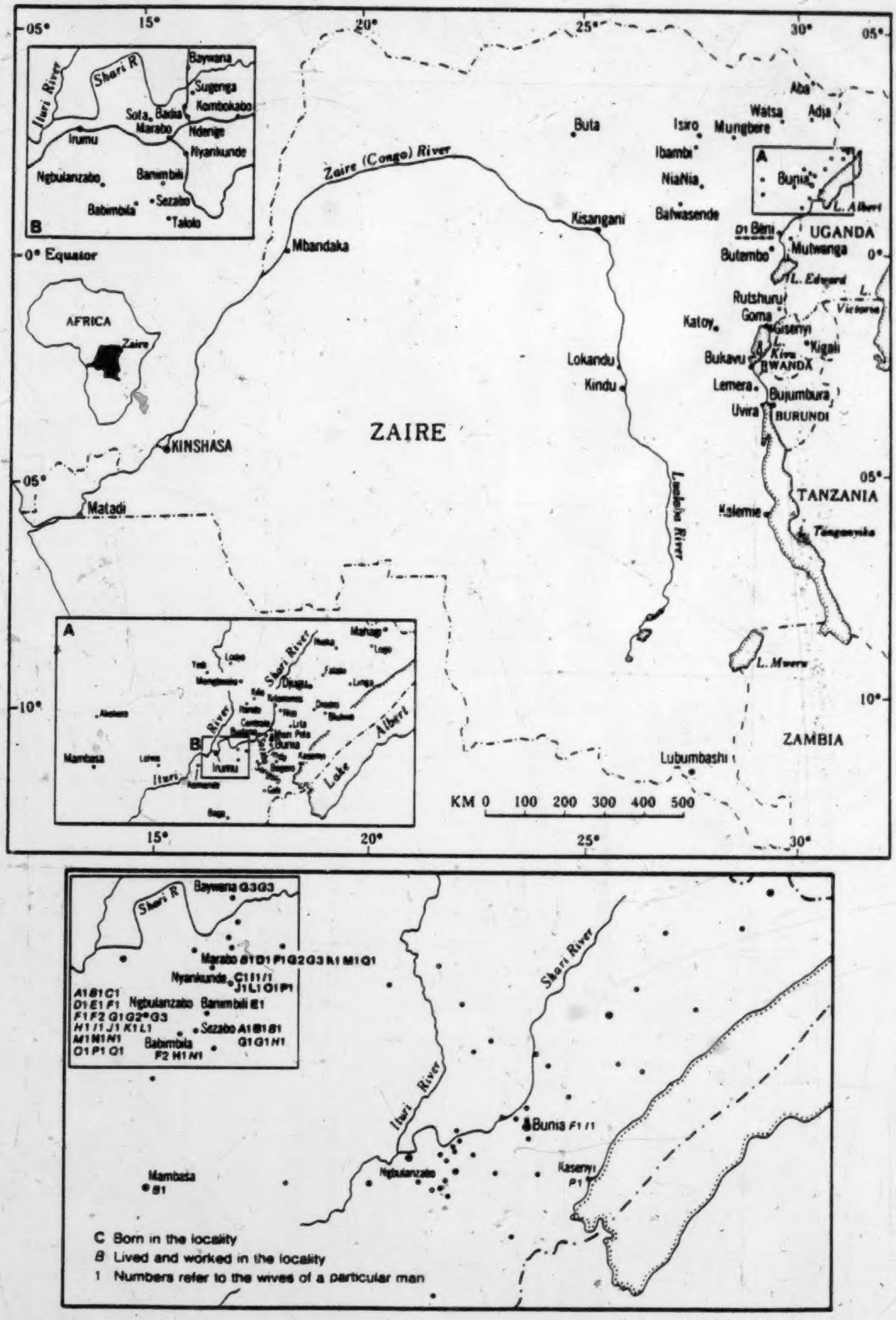
After the twins, the missionary doctors told E.C. that it would be dangeous for her to bear more children, and they performed a hysterectomy. To E.C., this did not seem to be a problem. However, C.N. did not get over the disappointment of not fathering more children, which was the traditional ambition for the Bira. A man with a large number of offspring was greatly respected. He had secured the continuity of his lineage. He went on having secretive affairs and offspring from these, having to pay delivery money to various women. E.C. encouraged him to take another wife legally. Having been a leading Christian, he did not want to do so until recently. When I left the community for Canada, he had agreed to take a second wife.

Before this solution was agreed upon, E.C. and C.N. had many fights, some of them violent. Once his lover and her relatives beat E.C. to unconsiousness. On those occasions, she went back to her childhood home at Sezabo until her husband came to beg her to return to Ngbulanzabo. She threatened to go to Mambasa to live with her brother, but C.N. invariably locked her clothes away; so she never left, since going without a change of clothing would have been shameful.

After coming home from Uganda, C.N. stayed in one place for years. He hired men to hoe huge gardens to sell food to the medical students of Nyankunde. He also had workers to make charcoal and saw boards in the forest. In the early 1980's, he went to Kasenyi, at Lake Mobutu (Albert), and tried fishing. However, he lost his boat and nets, and returned home empty-handed. He continued in fields and the board business and was the first Ngbulanzabo man to buy a pick-up truck. He bought fish (from the lake) at Bunia wholesale and made his wife sell them in the local market.

How typical are the moving patterns of E.C. and C.N. village-wide? We can compare E.C. (Letter B1 in Map 3) to 19 other women, now living in Ngbulanzabo, whose moving patterns I have recorded. All but one were born in villages not far from Ngbulanzabo

**Map 3: Ngbulanzabo women's residences**

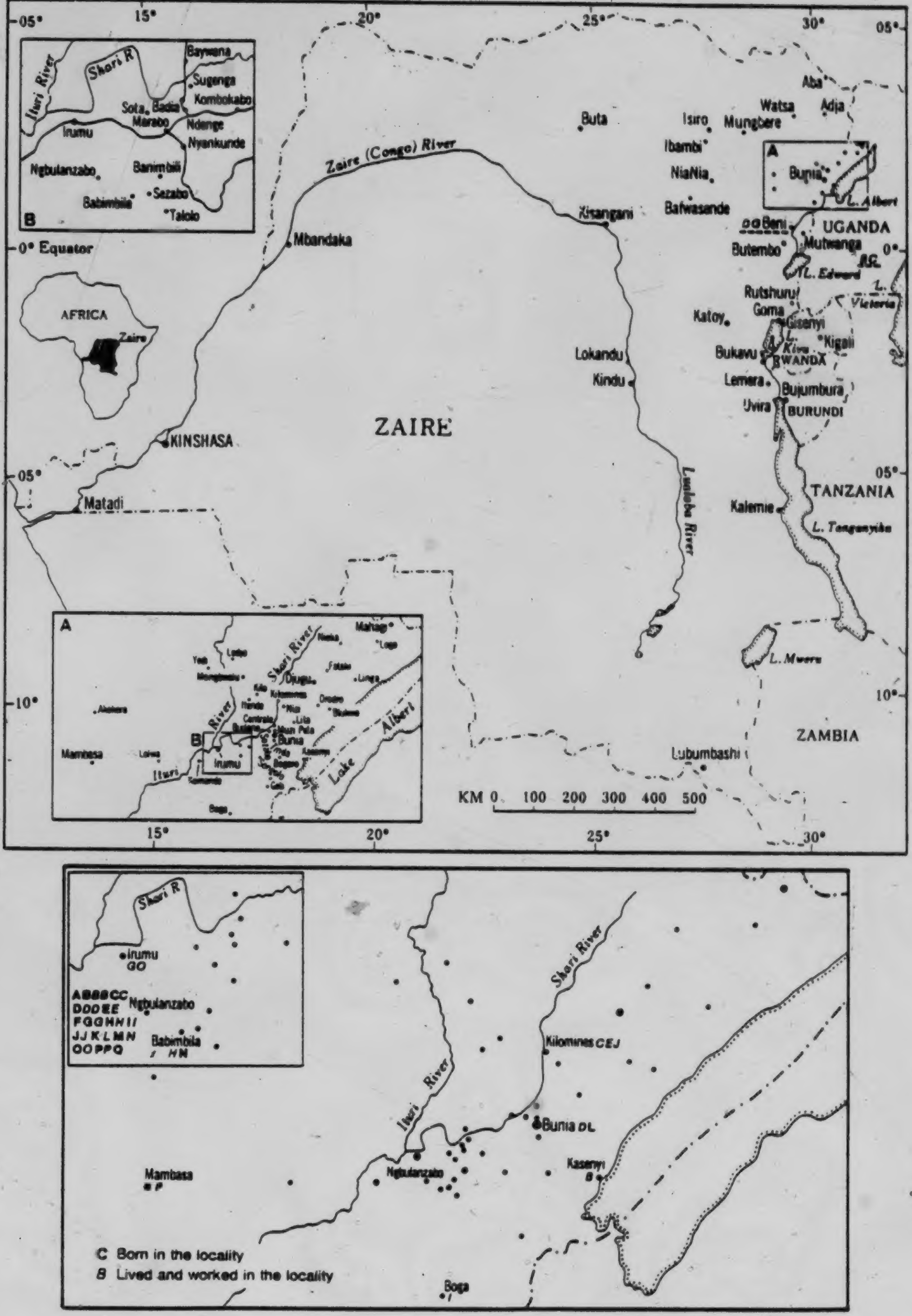

ZAIRE
Zaire (Congo) River
Lualaba River
0° Equator
05°
10°
15°
20°
25°
30°
KM 0 100 200 300 400 500
AFRICA
Zaire
Mbandaka
KINSHASA
Matadi
Buta
Isiro
Mungbere
Watsa
Aba
Adja
Ibambi
NiaNia
Bafwasende
Kisangani
Bunia
L. Albert
UGANDA
Beni
Butembo
Mutwanga
L. Edward
L. Victoria
Rutshuru
Goma
Gisenyi
Katoy
Bukavu
L. Kivu
RWANDA
Kigali
Lemera
Bujumbura
Uvira
BURUNDI
Lokandu
Kindu
TANZANIA
Kalemie
Tanganyika
L. Mweru
ZAMBIA
Lubumbashi
A
B
Ituri River
Shari R
Baywana
Sugenga
Sota
Badia
Kombokabo
Marabo
Irumu
Ndenge
Nyankunde
Ngbulanzabo
Banimbili
Babimbila
Sezabo
Talolo
Shari River
Mahagi
Lake Albert
Mambasa
Ituri
Irumu
Bunia
Kasenyi
Baywana G3G3
Marabo B1D1 F1G2G3 K1 M1Q1
Nyankunde C1I1/1 J1L1 O1P1
A1B1C1 D1E1F1 F1F2 G1G2*G3 H1/1 J1 K1L1 M1N1N1 O1P1 Q1
Ngbulanzabo
Banimbili E1
Sezabo A1B1B1 G1G1H1
Babimbila F2 H1N1
Bunia F1/1
Kasenyi P1
Mambasa B1
C Born in the locality
B Lived and worked in the locality
1 Numbers refer to the wives of a particular man

(Marabo, Baywana, Nyankunde, Sezabo, Banimbili, or Babimbila). At marriage, they changed places; some divorced and changed places again. The one woman, N1, was born at Ngbulanzabo, married out to Babimbila but when calamities happened, she and her husband moved to her village. (Often with witchcraft it was thought that the woman's side was less fierce than the man's side.) Very few Ngbulanzabo women (Map 3) have been living outside the immediate southern Bira area: Only two women have lived in Bunia (F1 as married, I1 in an orphanage as a child), one, P1 in Kasenyi, and one, D1 (Large Map) in Beni when their husbands worked there. These cases show that the majority of the sample are following the traditional way even today.

We can compare C.N. (Letter B in Map 4) to 16 other Ngbulanzabo men. All but two were born at Ngbulanzabo. One man was born in Bunia when his father worked there as a carpenter, the other man was born in Babimbila but, as mentioned above, chose to bring his family to live in his wife's village. Eleven of 17 Ngbulanzabo men (Map 4) have lived elsewhere for some time, as children with relatives, or as adults working for a plantation, mines, church, bakery, or to stay in a hospital (Letter O in Irumu). Only five men of 17 followed the traditional way of staying in their lineage villages all their lives. When comparing women's and men's movements, one could say that colonialism touched men more than women by making them abandon traditional patterns of living.

The sample represents only Bira who have lived at Ngbulanzabo at least since 1974. As described in the section on Ngbulanzabo, since then the village has had an increasing influx of outsiders: Hema

Map 4: Ngbulanzabo men's residences


ZAIRE
AFRICA
Zaire
Zaire (Congo) River
Lualaba River
Ituri River
Shari R
Shari River
Lake Albert
L. Albert
L. Edward
L. Kivu
L. Victoria
L. Tanganyika
L. Mweru
UGANDA
RWANDA
BURUNDI
TANZANIA
ZAMBIA
0° Equator
KINSHASA
Matadi
Mbandaka
Kisangani
Buta
Isiro
Ibambi
NiaNia
Bafwasende
Watsa
Mungbere
Aba
Adja
Bunia
Beni
Butembo
Mutwanga
Rutshuru
Goma
Gisenyi
Kigali
Katoy
Bukavu
Lemera
Bujumbura
Uvira
Lokandu
Kindu
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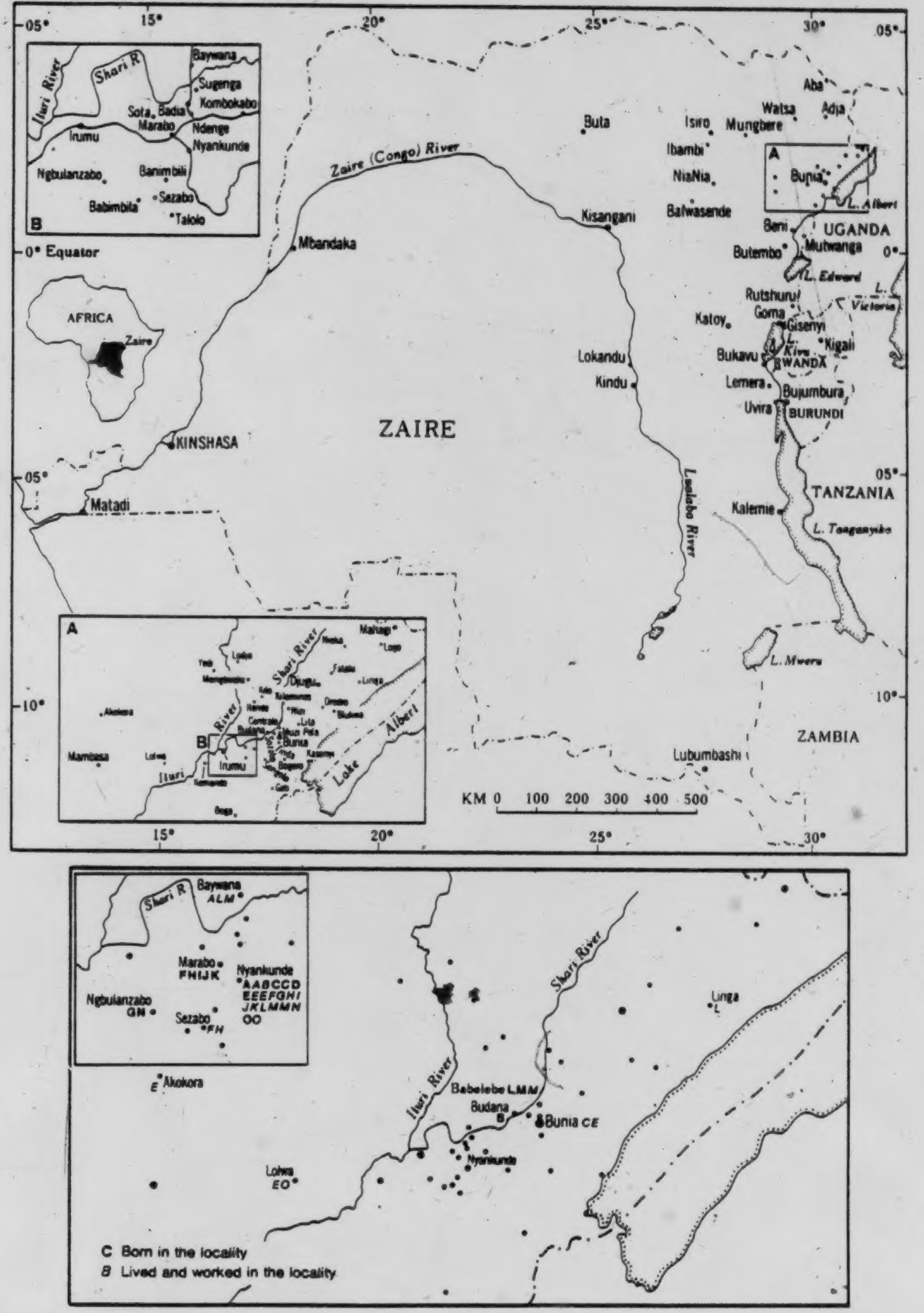
Sota
Badia
Marabo
Ndenge
Nyankunde
Irumu
Ngbulanzabo
Banimbili
Sezabo
Babimbila
Talolo
Mambasa
Boga
Kilomines
Kasenyi
Djugu
Mahagi
C Born in the locality
B Lived and worked in the locality

cattle herders, Bira from other villages, more returning men, and finally the Bible school staff and students.

How do the other two villages, Sezabo and Gerechabo, compare to Ngbulanzabo? Sezabo would be very similar to Ngbulanzabo; Gerechabo would have more men who were born elsewhere and worked in mines. The previous section mentioned that only a minority of Gerechabo men are original lineage members of the village.

The following is an example of a Bira woman and a man (not a couple), who lived at the Protestant mission station, Nyankunde. N.E. (Letter E in Map 5) was born in 1930 at Nyankunde. Her father was a Ngbulanzabo man but had moved to the mission station as a preacher. She married a man who worked for the missionaries as a cook. They lived in Akokora for eight years because of her husband's work for missionaries. In 1959, they moved to Bunia. Her husband worked as a mechanic for a Greek. She bore five children, of whom two died as infants. The husband left the work for the missionaries, because he took a second wife. N.E., in turn, left her husband, because she believed that the second wife was trying to poison her. In fact, she said that she was able to prove it in court. She went Lolwa and was asked to become a second wife to a church elder but she refused the offer. She has one child from this brief encounter. She had now lived at Nyankunde for a long time. She was working as a servant for missionaries. She also had gardens which she took pride in hoeing. During the school terms, her daughter's three sons, ages seven to twelve, boarded with her while at school. She also took care of another daughter's infant. Her old mother lived next door to her.

Map 5: Nyankunde women's residences


ZAIRE
AFRICA
Zaire
UGANDA
RWANDA
BURUNDI
TANZANIA
ZAMBIA
Zaire (Congo) River
Lualaba River
KINSHASA
Matadi
Mbandaka
Kisangani
Buta
Isiro
Mungbere
Watsa
Aba
Adja
Ibambi
NiaNia
Bafwasende
Bunia
L. Albert
Beni
Butembo
Mutwanga
L. Edward
L. Victoria
Rutshuru
Goma
Gisenyi
Katoy
Kigali
L. Kivu
Bukavu
Lemera
Bujumbura
Uvira
Lokandu
Kindu
Kalemie
L. Tanganyika
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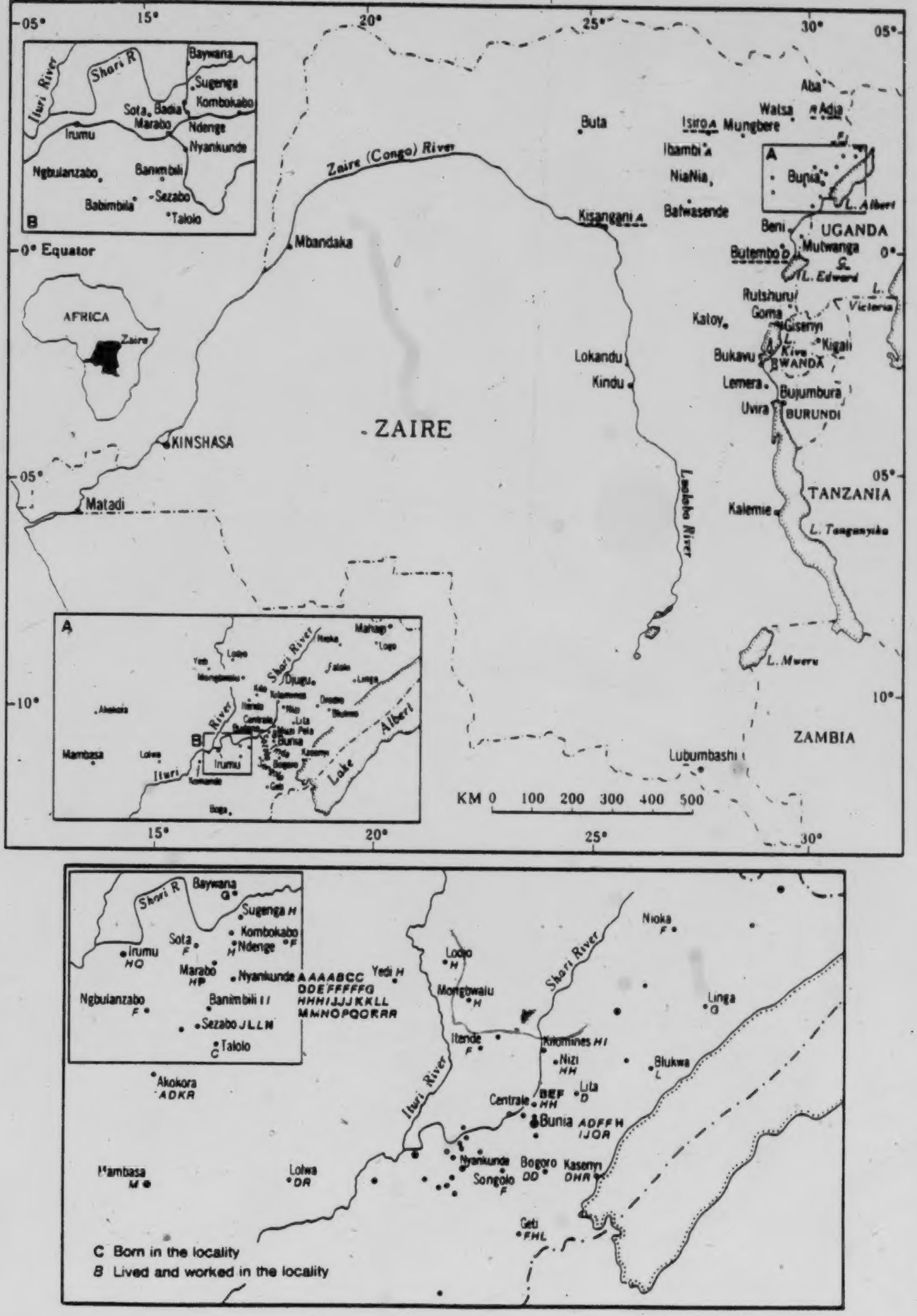
Shari River
Ituri River
Lake Albert
Irumu
Mahagi
Mambasa
Akokora
Lolwa
Baywana
Sugenga
Kombokabo
Sota
Badia
Marabo
Ndenge
Nyankunde
Ngbulanzabo
Banimbili
Babimbila
Sezabo
Taloio
Shari R
Baywana ALM
Marabo FHIJK
Nyankunde AABCCD EEEFGHI JKLMMN OO
Ngbulanzabo GN
Sezabo FH
Akokora E
Babelebe LMM
Budana B
Bunia CE
Linga L
Lolwa EO
C Born in the locality
B Lived and worked in the locality

H.S. (Letter D in Map 6) was born at Nyankunde in 1941. He belonged to one of the original lineages just outside the mission borders. His father who had been a porter for the first Protestant missionaries, was still alive . H.S. started school at Nyankunde, but went to Lita to continue in 1957, because Nyankunde did not have all the grades then. He continued his education also in Muzi-Pela and in Butembo in 1959. In 1961, he started teaching school at Lolwa (a Protestant school), then Akokora, Bogoro, Kasenyi, and Nyamamba. He continued his own education in Bogoro from 1968 to 1970. He came to teach at Nyankunde in 1971. He tried to continue his own education in the secondary school but gave up and began to farm his lineage lands. In addition to regular staple crops, he grew coffee for sale. He was the secretary for the coffee growers' association ("Cooperative des petits planteurs des cafes") at Nyankunde.

H.S.'s father arranged for him to marry a girl from Marabo in 1959. They had eight children. H.S., in turn, had paid the bride wealth for his son's wife, but the son had left her after a while. Now the son was living with another girl, but H.S. did not want to risk losing other payments until he saw that the union would last. H.S. was an active member of the Protestant church at Nyankunde.

When one looks at the Nyankunde women's map (Map 5), one can see that eleven women of 15 were born in villages other than Nyankunde and came to Nyankunde at marriage or with their husbands. This is the traditional pattern. Two women were born and married at Nyankunde, which is not traditional. (Two other women went out at marriage but returned home after divorce, which also follows the traditional

Map 6: Nyankunde men's residences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Marabo HP
Nyankunde AAAABCC DDEFFFFFG HHHIJJJKKLL MMNOPQQRRR
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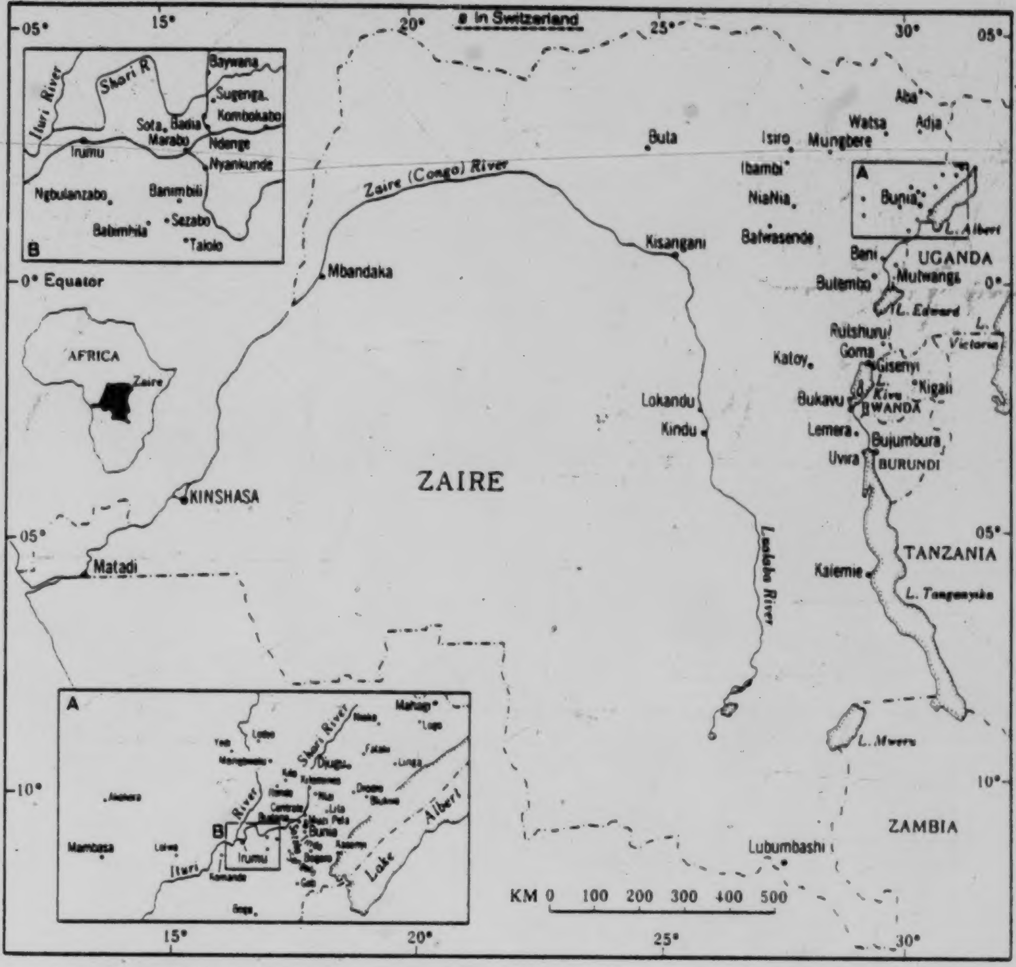
Ngbulanzabo F
Banimbili II
Sezabo JLLN
Talolo C
Nioka F
Lodjo H
Mongbwalu H
Linga G
Itende F
Kilomines HI
Nizi HH
Blukwa L
Lita D
Centrale BEF HH
Bunia ADFFH IJOR
Akokora ADKR
Mambasa M
Lolwa DR
Nyankunde
Bogoro DD
Kasenyi DHR
Songolo F
Geti FHL
Ituri River
C Born in the locality
B Lived and worked in the locality

arrangements.) Nine men of 18 (Map 6) were born at Nyankunde, while the other half had come to Nyankunde later in life. When female and male movements are compared, one can see that men have been to more places than women. With their travel, they have seen other ways of living than their own, including western ways, when they have worked in occupations made possible by the colonial administration. One could also guess that they are not as traditional as women, because the latter have travelled less and been exposed to fewer different ways from their own.

At the Catholic mission station, Muzi-Pela, a female example is N.E. (F in Map 7). She was born in 1938 at Muzi-Pela, where her father was working for the mission as a mason. He died when she was still an infant. The missionaries took care of the family. She married a man who belonged to Andisoma clan and moved to his village, Bogoro. She bore one daughter before her husband died. Then she returned to her mother at Muzi-Pela. She married again with a man of the Basili clan and moved to live with him at Tinda. She bore five children to him. One of them was a still birth. Then she divorced (death of a child was often regarded as the fault of the spouse) and came to live with her mother, who then died at Muzi-Pela. Her third husband moved in with her in her house. She bore three children for him, but they all died. She and her husband split up because of the death of their children, and he died in 1986. N.E.'s daughter from her first marriage had just died when I became acquainted with her, and she was observing the mourning rituals. Another daughter who was married in Kasenyi came down with her son to spend time with her mother during the mourning.

Map 7: Muzi-Pela women's residences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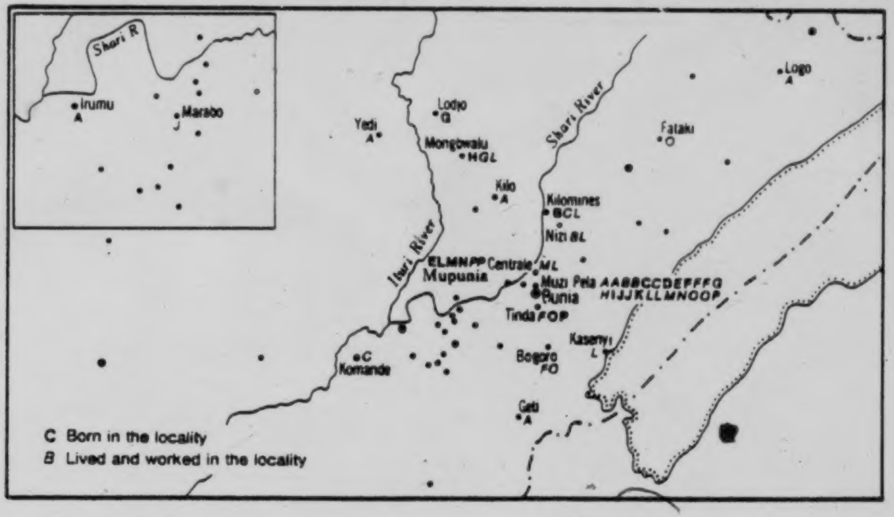
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C Born in the locality
B Lived and worked in the locality

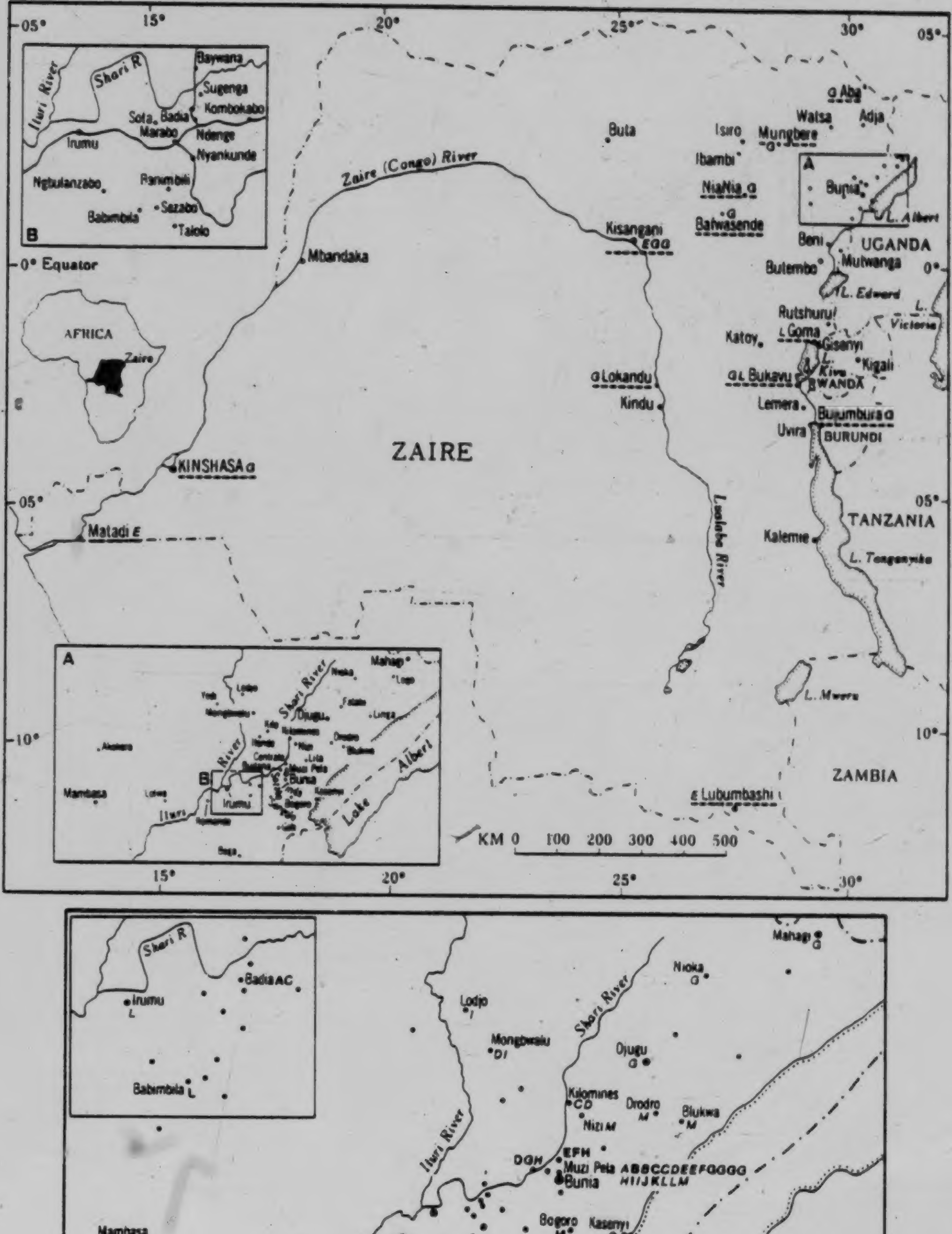
N.E.'s two adolescent sons lived off-and-on with her. A distant relative, another adolescent, stayed with her for some time while looking for a job in town. Although she had inherited large fields from her mother, they lay fallow because she did not have the strength to hoe, and her sons refused to do so. She made her living by distilling liquor twice a week. The last time I saw her, she was extremely depressed because her son had been caught stealing and she had to go to the chief's office to deal with the problem.

L.K. (Letter E in Map 8) was born in 1912 in the area of Bobwa clan. When he was adolescent, he went to study carpentry with "Frères Mariste" at Muzi-Pela. At the age of 20, he was forced into the military and sent to far-away cities: Lubumbashi, Matadi (on West Coast!), and Kisangani. Then he had an accident and split his thumb. He was released from the military and went to Muzi-Pela to look for work. His mother's sister was living there and took him to the missionaries for work. Since then, he has worked as a mason at Muzi-Pela. He also did free-lance work in town.

L.K. did not marry when in military service but had local girls "help him". At Muzi-Pela, he received his first wife. She bore a daughter, who died as an infant. The wife died as well. He remarried and had six children by his second wife. She died in 1979, and L.K. took a third wife, who had already had eight children by her former husband. Although aged, L.K.'s wife worked in their fields every day and cut reeds to sell in the market.

None of L.K.'s sons were married, which saddened him. All but one son lived at Kasenyi, and L.K. did not know their whereabouts. He

Map 8: Muzi-Pela men's residences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Kasenyi G
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Komanda E
C Born in the locality
B Lived and worked in the locality

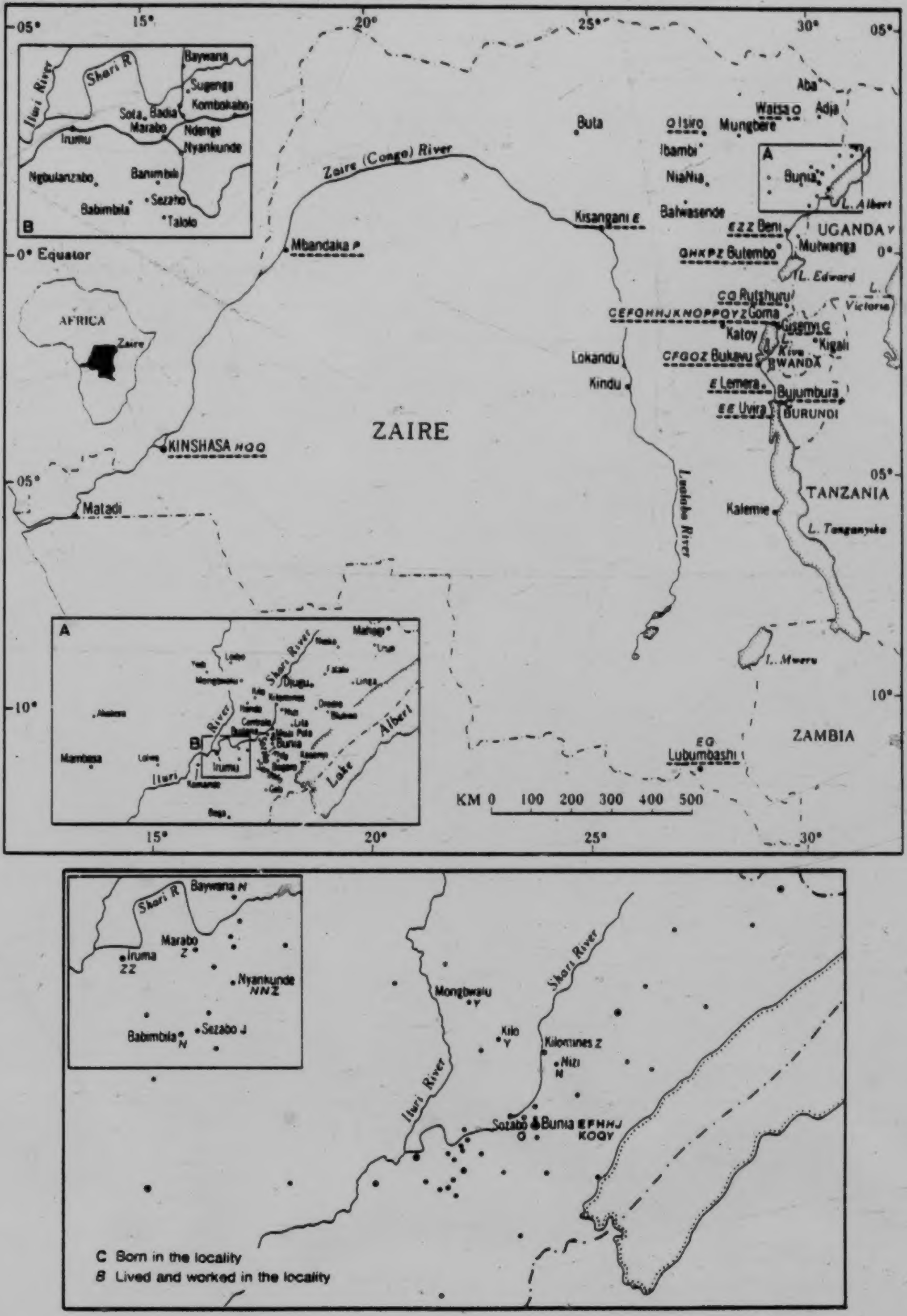
had brought a wife to his eldest son, who lived at Muzi-Pela, but he refused to come home while the young wife was there. L.K. had to send the girl away. His daughters were married and had children; one of the daughters was a teacher at Muzi-Pela. During the field-work, I was able to attend a lavish feast at L.K.'s home to honor his dead mother and wife. Traditional and Catholic features were mixed in the rituals.

When comparing the residential past of women and men of Muzi-Pela, one notices that men have lived in more places and further away than women. (One of the Bira women, a Catholic sister, had been sent to Switzerland for education, which was not possible to show on Map 7.) Half of the Bira men (six of 12, Map 8) and about one third (six of 16) of Bira women were born at Muzi-Pela. Of these, only two men and one woman belonged to the local lineages; the rest were born there because their parents had moved to live at the mission. When compared to Nyankunde, Muzi-Pela was less traditional, since proportionately more men at Nyankunde belonged to the local lineages and proportionately more women had moved to Nyankunde at marriage. Muzi-Pela people have lived in a wider area than Nyankunde people.

The final examples come from Goma. M.S. (Letter E in Map 9) was born in 1958 in Bunia. Because her father was in the army, the family moved around. M.S.'s first memories came from Kisangani. As told in Bira History (Chapter Three), she saw many horrors during the Simba-rebellion. The family moved to Katanga, near Lubumbashi, then to Uvira and Lemera, back to Uvira, and then to Goma. While in Goma, her father arranged her to marry R.T. when she was 14 years old in 1972.

R.T., her husband (Letter D in Map 10) was born at Muzi-Pela in

Map 9: Goma women's residences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Nizi N
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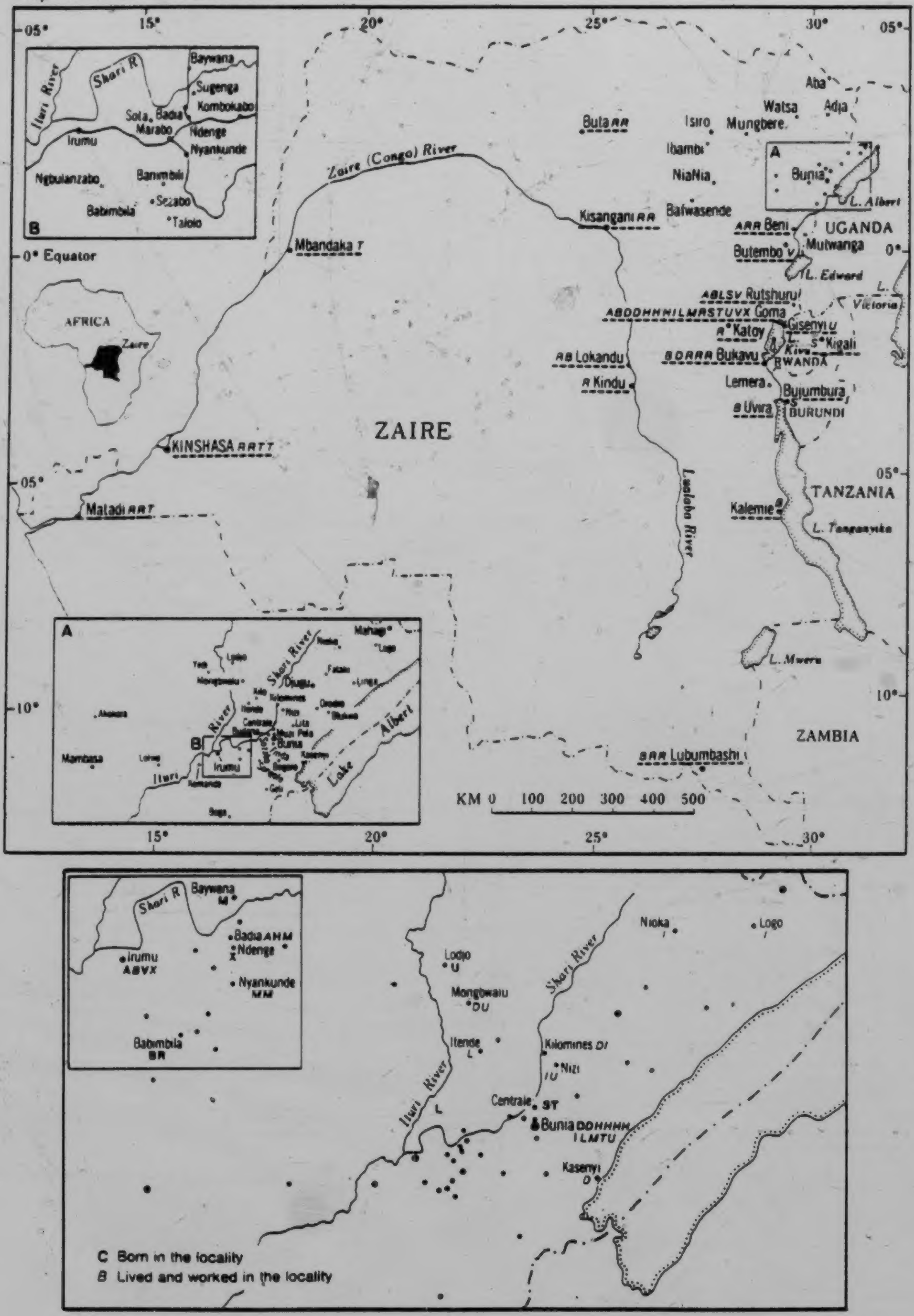
C Born in the locality
B Lived and worked in the locality

Map 10: Goma men's residences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R Katoy
S Kigali
BDRRR Bukavu
RB Lokandu
R Kindu
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C Born in the locality
B Lived and worked in the locality

1939. His father was working for the mines, and the family moved to Mongbwalu and then Kilo Mines. Later the father started fishing at Kasenyi. R.T. went to school in each location and continued at Muzi-Pela, where he lived in a boarding school. His parents divorced, and his mother went to Goma and remarried. He went down to Goma to live with his mother and continued technical school there. In 1958, he started working for a furniture company and had to move to Bukavu for a couple years with the company. Then he moved back to Goma and worked in carpentry for different businesses and on his own.

His step-father acquired him his first wife. She was a Bira girl. The couple had three sons. The wife took off to Bujumbura, leaving the small children, after she had had a miscarriage. She told me that she left because of beatings she received from her husband. She returned from Bujumbura in 1979 and lived with another man in Goma. R.T. took his second wife, our female example. They had five children. M.S. made money by distilling liquor. She had some alcohol problems. Other Bira told me that she forgot to cook food when she was drunk and kept singing and drumming instead of cooking. Once she was caught distilling liquor and had to spend some time in prison. Another time, she escaped by paying a fine. M.S.'s second youngest son was suffering from kwashiorkor (severe malnutrition) in 1984. Her parents, who were on their way to Beni with a new military transfer, took him with them, promising to take care of him. The youngest son in Goma and the second youngest in Beni died two days apart in 1984. After M.S. had buried the youngest one in Goma, she went to Beni to see the grave of the other son. Although there was talk about her returning any time, some said that she had married someone else in Beni. R.T. was depressed and was suffering from severe diarrhea, when I last saw him. He was not able to work any more. His mother, who lived next door, took care of his children. After my departure, I received a letter from Bira of Goma stating that he had died.

When looking at the residence maps of Goma women (Map 9) and men (Map 10), it is interesting to note that none was born in Goma. Their place of residence did not have the same meaning to them as to those Bira, who were born and grew up in their clan land. All men and most women were born in the Bira area. Four women of eleven were born elsewhere: Kilomines, Butembo, Bujumbura. It is also interesting to realize that Goma women have lived in about equal number of places and in about equal areas as men. In all the other localities, women's residences have been more restricted than men's. One could then conclude that Bira women living in Goma have been exposed to different traditions from their own to the same degree as men have.

When comparing all the maps, we can see a continuum where Ngbulanzabo is on one end, followed by Nyankunde and Muzi-Pela, with Goma at the other end. The area of residences widens from one end of the continuum to the other, being the smallest for Ngbulanzabo and largest for Goma. The women's areas stay smaller than men's, except in Goma.

Although people moved from one location to another, they adjusted to a new place fairly easily. E.C., who came to visit me in Bukavu for two weeks, started observing the life style in Bukavu right away. She noticed the differences in Swahili dialect, in dress, in market manner, etc. Soon she was comfortable 600 kilometers away from home. An old lady came from Bunia to visit her sister (R.T.'s mother) in Goma. She learned her way to the market and water tap right away, and soon she was active in making her living by local standards, distilling liquor and weaving baskets. In villages, I observed men who were returning from the mines to live in their home villages during their retirement. They adapted fast. If they married, they followed the local practice, although their previous marriages in the mines may have been different. One could argue that a locality had a distinct tradition of its own which had to be followed by its residents. Therefore, when I interviewed people about their marriage arrangements, I was careful to note where they had been made. As the discussion below will show, locality presents economic and structural constraints and opportunities, which in turn determine the behavior of parents toward their children in adolescence. The observance or neglect of traditional marriage customs depends on it.

The discussion in this chapter has shown how the colonial administration opened up opportunities to travel for indigenous peoples. Traditionally, men remained in their natal villages and women married into nearby villages. Genealogies and life histories confirm this pattern in earlier times. With new opportunities, men and women left either voluntarily or by force (as in military) their traditional communities to pursue new goals. Nowhere was life easy. In villages, as elsewhere, accidents and deaths were uninvited visitors in most families. However, in large cities like Goma, life could produce more misery than in the villages. These descriptions have also shown the amazing adaptive ability which individuals possess wherever they decide to stay.

# CHAPTER SIX: CHRISTIAN TRANSFORMATION OF THE BIRA WORLD

With colonization and missionization, the Bira world has been transformed. During 60-70 years of missionization, Christianity has been universally accepted by the Bira. It is remarkable that the Bira view of the Christian God is very similar regardless of locality and in spite of denominational differences. When we continue to the behavioral aspects of parent-child relationship in the following chapter, the uniformity of communities in most aspects still continues, although local differences are starting to emerge. Finally, when discussing marital arrangements in the next chapter, the differences between the communities are the most striking.

In this chapter, the traditional Bira ideology is reconstructed through informants and written sources on the topic. The cornerstones of the Bira world, before the arrival of the foreigners, were beliefs in ancestors and witchcraft, which provided social control for the living. Bira also knew about God, Mbali, who had created the world and people, but he did not show interest in every-day matters and had nothing to do with social control. The changes in belief since the arrival of the white people will be traced, and a picture of Christian life in both Catholic and Protestant churches will be presented.

## Ancestor Beliefs Before and Now

Although ancestor beliefs were, in the old days, the supporting structure of Bira world view, today only remnants are left. Witchcraft has commonly survived in everyday thinking and practices although in modified forms. Traditionally, it was thought that sickness and calamity were caused by ancestors or witchcraft. A diviner had to decide in each case which of the two possibilities was involved. Old men who told me about this said that when ancestors were "looking for their gift", such as a chicken or a goat, they sent a sickness to a person. The healing ceremony then consisted of sacrifice of this gift to the ancestors.

Constance-Marie (1947) and old informants explained that traditionally people took good care to appease ancestors. There was a sacred place in each home consecrated to the ancestors. A man from the Hema tribe, called "mbandwa", was the only one qualified to do the task of consecration. Even today, ancestors were said to speak in the Hema language, which led Constance-Marie (Ibid.:126) and some Bira to say that the ancestor cult must have come from the Hema people. Constance-Marie describes how the head of a family used to sacrifice meat to the ancestors at the home altar. When doing this, he prayed for forgiveness for his sins and for help and protection in everyday life for his family.

Many old and young of the Bira of today told me that a small portion of the first fruit of the fields was always sacrificed to the ancestors before anyone dared to eat food from the fields. Otherwise, the person would have died. The Bira used to build huts for the ancestors, where food was put. Sick people were taken next to these small huts, and healing ceremonies with animal sacrifices were conducted there for them by the "mbandwa".

A very important part of the ancestor tradition was "Sakana", who was perceived as a collectivity of the village ancestors and was impersonated by grown male members of the village lineages. According to Constance-Marie (Ibid.:122), the practice of Sakana arrived among the Bira through the Lese tribe in the south. The function of Sakana was to frighten people into proper behavior. Sakana's fierce voice could be heard from time to time through the village. Now people said that the voice was produced by a man blowing through a bamboo pipe to a clay pot. Sakana was the men's secret from women and uninitiated children. If a child misbehaved, he was taken to Sakana, which would make his behavior change. The informants confirmed that this was so.

Sakana would travel through a village from time to time. According to Bungamuzi (1971), Sakana was dressed in banana leaves. He was surrounded by village youngsters who had been initiated to the Sakana cult. Women and children had to run into their huts and close their eyes on threat of death. Constance-Marie (1947) writes that Sakana beat the roof of the huts with a cattle rope, frightening the people inside. With a roaring voice, he would terrorize women until they promised to behave better towards their husbands. He would demand a bracelet or a necklace from the woman. If a woman did not keep her promise, he threatened to cause her death with this object. Sakana was used to persuade girls to marry according to the will of their fathers. It was believed that if a woman left her husband with a child, she would be killed by Sakana, according to Constance-Marie. Some old Bira men told me that, in the old days, a woman deserting her husband would not actually be killed but she would loose weight drastically. It was important for the Bira to gain weight rather than lose it. Even today, a marriage was evaluated as being happy if both partners had healthy looking bodies. Ngoyi (1981) stated that ancestors could cause sterility in a woman.

Those village women who had experienced Sakana's visits to the village told me that they were terribly frightened. They could not see Sakana, because they were inside with eyes closed. They said that Sakana sent village youngsters into the house to ask for, say, salt. If a woman said that she did not have any, Sakana would know that she was lying, and the youngster would say where the woman kept it. This omniscience of Sakana had impressed the women.

Young boys were initiated in groups to Sakana cult, or as Bira men put it, "they were taken to know Sakana" at the age of 13 or 14, according to Constance-Marie, or "just before getting married", according to Bira informants, which should fall about those years. "I came to know Sakana together with so and so," Bira men would say. An older boy, initiated during the previous ceremony, would "take" another one to the present ceremony. No women or children were allowed there. The eyes of the boys were blindfolded. The relatives of the boys were divided in two: one side attacked the boys; the other side protected them. The boys were beaten, clawed, and scratched. They received bleeding wounds. A man, now about 42 years of age, told me that he did not feel like living any more, it was so awful. Then their eyes were opened and they were asked to "know" Sakana. And they learned that there was no Sakana, only male relatives. They were warned not to reveal this secret to anyone, lest they die.

The Bira claim that they have never had any initiation rites of circumcision, so typical of Sub-Saharan Africa (Van Gennep 1960), nor have any old written sources mentioned them. Initiation into the knowledge of Sakana replaced circumcision. This Sakana ceremony is in many ways similar to the Kachina initiation of the Hopi of the North America (Dennis 1940, Aberle 1967) and the initiation to the secret of Konden Diara of Upper Guinea (Laye 1954). The latter is similar to Sakana tradition in that it was taboo to women and children, and like the Bira, they hid themselves inside their huts. Like Sakana, Konden Diara roared loudly and was surrounded by older boys of the village. These noises, imitating the roar of a lion, were produced artificially. Those who did not obey this creature were severely whipped. Also, the roles of Kachina and Sakana seem to have been very similar. Kachinas were used as an enforcement for the obedience of children. Kachinas were said to be gods but they were actually men with carved heads. The boys learned this secret after a horrible flogging where they might involuntarily defecate and urinate. Boys learned that gods were actually the trickery of the adults of the community. This discovery brought feelings of disillusionment, resentment, and mistrust to a Hopi boy, according to Aberle (1967) and Dennis (1940).

When a wild animal, such as a buffalo or leopard, was killed in a hunt, the men of the village would arrange a dance for Sakana as an expression of gratitude for giving them good hunting success. This happened in the bush, not in the village. Today, it was rare to get any game, but, if it happened, the old tradition was said to be still followed, and the skin of the animal was brought to the chief, to whom it was said to belong.

Christian missionaries, both Catholic and Protestant, attacked the tradition of "ancestor worship". Bira stated that they destroyed the smaller "nsaka" and larger "kiroro" huts, which were used in the ancestor cult. They said that God only was to be worshiped and not ancestors. I personally have never seen any huts. Men of about thirty years of age have seen them used by their fathers' generation. Bira said that this custom was no longer practiced but that perhaps somewhere in the bush it might be followed. A Bira lady in Goma told me that she had a hut built when a deceased Bira woman bothered her by causing seizures and a wound in her leg. In crisis situation, such as in prolonged illness, the Bira might offer meat and beer to their ancestors inside their home, although home altars for ancestors have been removed. There was a man in his seventies in a village, who was said to have fallen ill the moment he destroyed his home altar. The angry ancestors were believed to have sent epilepsy into him; since then, he had seizures. The custom of offering the first fruit of the field to the ancestors was also said to have been abandoned.

The ancestors and Sakana tradition helped to keep the marriages together and discipline the children. Mentioning Sakana's name usually kept children in line. If need be, Sakana was provoked to walk through the village in the manner described above. In a Bira wedding, the bride was marked with ancestors' saliva by the groom's lineage elders. This was thought of as a blessing of the ancestors if the bride stayed with her husband, but it would become a curse if she left him. Today, church weddings do not observe this custom. In traditional weddings, it was still observed, but its power was no more believed in. A Bira woman told me, "We Protestants do not believe that it is the ancestor's spit that keeps our marriage together but it is God who keeps it together." Divorces are very common. If a woman is not happy with a man, she simply takes off and joins another man in another village. The Bira are no longer afraid of either God's or ancestors' wrath if their marriages do not stay together. A Bira woman put it this way, "People are not afraid of God but they know that God exists."

Bira allege that extramarital relations are more common now than they used to be. Traditionally, extramarital relations were legal in a limited form: a man was allowed to have sexual relations with his older brother's wife. If the husband of such a woman saw his brother's spear stuck on the ground at the door of his hut, he would respect this sign and leave his brother alone with his wife. (A Similar arrangement is reported among the Bwamba by Winter 1956). The colonial authorities forbade this custom, and the Bira are now embarrassed to talk about it. (A few informants talked to me about it.)

The punishment of the ancestors was feared in the old days, because it was believed unavoidable; this was evident to everyone of the village. If someone stole, he surely would be struck by lightning, which the ancestors sent to him. It was explained that this supernatural punishment worked through human operation. A person who had lost, for example, food from his garden went to the ancestors and prayed them to send a punishment on the thief. Now, since everyone was a Christian, this did not happen. My suggestion that an aggrieved person pray for God to punish the thief, aroused shock. "A Christian has to love his neighbour and forgive, not ask for punishment." So nothing had taken the place of ancestors' wrath in the present philosophy.

The tradition of Sakana was discontinued fairly recently. My informant at Ngbulanzabo remembered that he had been taken to Sakana in 1958. In his village, Sakana was abondoned in 1965, in Sezabo in 1960. Around Muzi-Pela, the custom was said to have finished much before that, but no years were quoted. It was common that both Protestant and Catholic Bira laughed at the Sakana tradition by saying "It was a lie." A Catholic woman at Muzi-Pela continued, however, by saying that God blessed it at that time, because the Bira did not know better. It was a lie but it worked! A Protestant church elder at Nyankunde stated that he was the first in his village, Sezabo, to fight against the Sakana tradition. When he had announced that there was no Sakana, people had warned him that he would die of Sakana's poison. But he proved there was no poison by not dying. Thus the Christians were the first ones to abandon traditional social controls. This study demonstrates that adequate new social controls, neither in the religious nor in the administrative level, were found after the collapse of the traditional system.

My Ngbulanzabo informant, C.N., pointed out that the present day Sakanas were the soldiers. Indeed, the soldiers attacked people and beat them brutally (cf. Chapter Five about Goma). However, there was a basic difference between the soldiers and Sakanas. The former were thought to discipline people to extract bribes, not for justice. E.g., although Goma people knew that it was illegal to bring merchandise from Rwanda without paying customs, nevertheless, they tried to smuggle it. They did not believe that the national laws were just. In contrast, the authority of Sakana derived from the moral consensus of the communities. No money or bribery was involved.

Traditionally, children were afraid of Sakana and obeyed their parents because of this. If a boy was disobedient, he was taken to Sakana, and beaten while blindfolded. When he was released, he was told that next time Sakana would kill him. Now there was no such enforcement. Children were beaten by their parents or father's brothers. If a youngster or an adult persisted in trouble, he was beaten by a whole group of his lineage elders in the traditional fashion, with the exception that there was no supernatural enforcement coming from Sakana. During the year of field research, an occasion of punishment was arranged for a grown-man who had beaten his older brother, which was considered a severe offence. He was beaten by men of his lineage until he was bleeding. A communal meal was eaten afterwards, and his conduct after this punishment was said to have improved completely. The meal was a continuation of the tradition of the ancestors, whereby the living members shared a meal with the dead by pouring libations to them on ground and offering meat for the dead.

In another case, a young married man was disciplined in similar fashion by his lineage elders for adultery. His father wanted him to stay with his wife, for whom the father had paid bridewealth. The young man was said not to have changed his habits. The disciplinary efforts in the case of a third young man were equally futile. A collective disciplinary practice helped in some cases but not in every case; this used to be a total success in the past, according to informants. Greater alternatives today make defiance of moral concensus possible.

The Bira were ready to acknowledge the prior disciplinary benefits of Sakana, but they prefered the present state of affairs. "Now there is the progress of (knowing) God". They also contrasted the fierceness of Sakana to the qualities of God, "God has much compassion, he is kind, gentle" ("Mungu iko na huruma sana, iko polepole"). When a Catholic father praised the mission for freeing the people from fear of ancestors into love of God, the statement above seems to support his claim: God is thought as loving, not fear-inspiring. The Bira explicitly attributed the break-down of obedience of children to parents and that of wives to their husbands to the end of the frightful Sakana character. When I asked, however, if they would like to return to the old tradition, they vigorously rejected the notion. Presently, there is nothing that took the place of Sakana as an agent of social control. The military police force, which was meant by the government to perform this function, did not work as efficiently as Sakana because the former did not rise from the lineage heritage of the society as Sakana did. Furthermore, the discipline inherent in the Christian doctrine is not understood by the Bira of today (discussed below).

The observances toward ancestors and concern about their will have not disappeared completely with the disappearance of the ancestor shrines. Funerals, wakes and ceremonies called "tanga", demonstrated respect for the ancestors ritually. This was more common among Catholics than Protestants, who consciously tried to make a clear cut break from traditions. When a funeral was held at church, both denominations followed the Western Christian type of service. Both denominations observed the traditional length of the wake, three days for a female and four for a male deceased. Loud wailing was heard in both cases. In Protestant funerals and wakes, mostly church hymns were sung, while, in Catholic funerals and wakes, traditional songs were sung after the mass. After the wake, the Catholics followed the tradition of ritual bathing to remove the "poison" of which the deceased died. This custom varied between different villages among the Protestants. In 1986, it was still common to accuse someone of killing the deceased by witchcraft and then proceed to beat her/him at the funeral. At the time of death, there was fighting between the deceased persons's lineage and the spouse' family, because one of the first suspects for a possible "killer" was a spouse. In the end, the Bira were supposed to come into harmony with the deceased and other ancestors by sharing alcoholic beverages and pouring libations on ground for them. People who did not have responsibilities in the church, either Catholic or Protestant, were more apt to follow the traditional accusation rituals than those who were more active in church. At a Catholic funeral in Goma, I observed that the Bira relatives of a widow were labelling the customs of the family of the deceased husband from another tribe as Pagan. "We are now Christian, let's do it in the proper Christian way." Then they would suggest a

Bira way, e.g., rubbing the widow with herbs to remove the influence of her deceased husband, which was by no means familiar to me from western Christianity.

"Tanga" is a feast held for the deceased about two years after his/her death. The string, a sign of mourning, was cut around the neck of the female relatives, alcoholic beverages were drunk, as in all traditional Bira feasts, and there was much dancing and singing. I attended such occasions. They were arranged by Catholics, but some Protestants were attending them as well. In these feasts, the deceased was greeted by his relatives, then asked to leave the house and leave its inhabitants in peace. The graves of the deceased were visited and weeded; they were addressed both with Catholic prayers and with traditional singing. The deceased were convinced of peace among the family and that the other members of the family were on their way to the same place. Again, beer and liquor were poured on the ground for the deceased.

It was striking that Protestants did not maintain the graves of their deceased. They were never visited after the funeral. When I asked why it was so, a mother answered pointing her finger up in the air, "Why should I go to the grave of my son when he is already in heaven?" As Protestants were not supposed to drink alcoholic beverages, they did not pour libations on the ground either.

After the "tanga", the ancestors were left alone. There were cases in which people had seizures, which were explained as "ancestors entering their heads". Many said that such seizures used to be much more common than now. The reasons for the seizures were said to be the neglect of ancestors' graves, their desire for white hens, rebellion of a young person against marrying, the order of a person to return home and leave school, anger after murder in the family, etc. People talked about these occasions with awe, and usually the orders were followed. For instance, the young man who was ordered to leave the secondary school he was attending did so and returned to his home village. He said that, had he tried to continue at school, he would not have succeeded. In another case, nothing was done, although the ancestors were demanding a feast with sacrifices. An informant stated that in this family a father had murdered his infant daughter, because he was tired of having only females instead of male offspring. This crime had not been appeased and that was why the family was still bearing more daughters than sons, and losing the due bridewealth of the daughters. Nobody in the family seemed to have the initiative to make arrangements for the required feast. In all these cases, it seems apparent that the ancestors were concerned about maintaining the social order among the living members of the lineage.

Although people spoke about seizures with awe and respect, there was one case where a husband was said to have forsaken his wife because of his annoyance with her frequent seizures. A Protestant woman told me that her family had ordered her to return to her home village to attend a feast for the deceased, lest she be attacked by them. Instead of returning home, she had invited the church elders of her marital village of residence, and they had prayed for her. It worked, since she has never been attacked.

I asked parents in my formal interview: "Do the 'bagili' (ancestors in Kibira) still punish?" Virtually everyone answered first in the negative, stressing the fact that Christianity had entered the country. After asking if they had heard about seizures, half of them admitted to having heard. Rarely did anyone admit to having had them personally, although another parent may have mentioned this person getting them.

This topic was addressed in the children's questionnaire in the following manner: "Long ago the Bira believed in 'bagili' (this word was purposely chosen and no help was given if they did not know it). Do you know what they were and what they did? If you know tell us." - The majority of children, 73% of them claimed not to know anything about them. The rest presented some characteristics of either Sakana or ancestors, calling them "Satans". The smallest proportion of groups of children showing some knowledge of ancestors was in secondary schools of the Catholic mission station at Muzi-Pela (6%,7% and 12 %), the largest proportion was in the Catholic girls' primary school at Muzi-Pela (35%) and a Protestant primary school at Ngbulanzabo (six out of nine students). One cannot be at all sure if the answers reflect the reality. Perhaps many more knew but did not want to appear as knowing to a white lady. When this question was read aloud, e.g., at Baywana village school, the whole class burst into a rolling laughter, but 77% claimed not to know of them. Their laughter seemed to betray them.

Several parents mentioned that formerly only men became possessed by ancestors, but these days both sexes were involved. In fact, the roles had reversed. Of those parents who admitted having heard of the seizures, 74% of the cases involved women and 9% men; the rest did not express the sex. It seemed to me that women showed also much more initiative and attended more funerals, wakes, and "tangas" than did the men. However, in the past these affairs were strictly men's business.

An informant, who had lived in Sezabo, Goma, and most recently at Nyankunde, described to me her experience with a seizure, which happened during my field work. She had gone stiff with the spirit of an ancestor. The spirit had spoken in Kihema (the Hema language). It stopped speaking when it realized that there were no men in the room, saying that it would not waste his words on women. So she did not receive any message from the ancestor spirit. Why were women then active, while men reduced their interest in ancestors? Could it be that when the male secret of Sakana was exposed to women and children, men lost some interest in the matter? Or was the reduced male activity with ancestors a result of men's involvement with the colonial world: work, education, and leaving home villages?

In conclusion, the idea of ancestors influencing the life of the living had lost most of its power. The ancestors were no longer offered the first fruit of the fields, as was the rule before. There were no visible places for sacrifice to the ancestors. Their immediate and certain way of punishment has disappeared. Yet, in a crisis situation, especially death or persistant sickness, the influence of ancestors was still acknowledged. Occasionally, the ancestors could express their will to the living by seizing them and speaking through their mouths. Women were increasingly involved in this area, taking over this realm from the men.

Although both the Catholic and Protestant missionaries have been against "ancestor worship", a current Catholic theologian, as mentioned in Chapter One, has recognized the need for ancestors to regain lost morality. However, the Bira are not aware of this discussion.

## Witchcraft and Magic

In traditional cosmology, if sickness, death or calamity were not caused by the wrath of ancestors, the other alternative was that they were caused by witchcraft. A diviner had to find out the cause. It was thought that these unhappy events had social causes, because the harmony of the society could be disturbed by the ill will of one member of the society against another. To restore the harmony, one had to find the guilty person or persons, then make them admit their action and participate in the healing the sick.

Among the southern Bira, only women were suspected of witchcraft. One middle-aged Bira man pointed out that men and women were engaged in a political power struggle wherein men manipulated the powers of ancestors while the women manipulated those of witchcraft. Contrasting powers of men and women are reported also among the Bugisu of Uganda, where men are thought of being in charge of the social affairs and women of natural affairs of procreation. Men's circumcision ceremonies are an expression of the men's control over nature, or women (LaFontaine 1972).

However, among the northern Bira, according to Constance-Marie (1947), either sex could practice witchcraft. Constance-Marie described the divining of the guilty person by different methods, such as throwing sticks in the water and interpreting their formation or using poison ordeals. An old Bira man said that all the women of the village would be gathered together, and each in turn would give their spit by saying: "If it (the guilty one) is I, may the sick person be healed!" The saliva was then mixed with herbal powder, which was administered to the sick person as medicine. Whether the cause of bringing calamity to another person was thought of jealousy, hurt feelings, or hatred which were destroying the harmony of the society, the act of spitting to make medicine to heal the sick was interpreted as restoration of harmony, because the guilty person participated with others in healing the sick.

The colonial government forbade poison ordeals and refused to deal with any witchcraft accusations in its courts. The idea that witchcraft did not exist or that it was not a scientific, i.e., "true", explanation of the reality, was put forward. Zaireans learned that there was no use in talking about witchcraft to white people, although this did not change the fact of its existence in their minds. The colonial policy is followed in the courts of the present independent administration, in that there were no official records on cases with witchcraft accusations. But, nevertheless, such cases were still dealt with and verdicts passed. I heard some Bira talk about people who had been able to prove witchcraft involvement in their particular case to the chief and won their case. While doing fieldwork in a village, an elderly man was held in the chief's prison. He had allegedly killed a child of his lineage by witchcraft. The child's mother had seen his face in a dream, and, after she told that to the chief, he admitted his guilt.

The attitude of the missions, both Catholic and Protestant, towards witchcraft and sorcery has been similar to that of the colonial administration. (The situation has been consistent in Zaire as reported of the Kongo by Janzen 1978). When a person fell ill, he should be taken to a dispensery or a hospital to get medical treatment, and the causes should not be sought in the social realm. Native herbalists who used the natural healing qualities of plants were accepted by Catholic leaders. Protestant missions acknowledged some psychological influence of "witchdoctors". However, missions tacitly acknowledged the power of supernatural forces as expressed in spirit world. Any dealing with witchcraft or sorcery was understood by missions as dealing with demonic or Satanic powers. Christians were advised not to deal with demons. They were reminded that God's spiritual power surpassed the powers of Satan. Christians should appeal to this godly power to be safe. Beliefs in ancestors and witchcraft were treated the same way: the missions saw themselves as liberating people from terror of evil spirits into the love of God. African Christians claimed that witchcraft accusations were not dealt with in the church but were referred to chiefs'courts. A pastor's wife stated, "Even if there was witchcraft involved in a matter, we will not name it".

The following is an attempt to outline the characteristics of present day witchcraft, as elicited from children's questionnaires and parents' interviews.

Among 311 schoolchildren in six locations, there were only five students, all high school students at the Catholic mission station, who claimed forcefully (by writing it several times) that there was no witchcraft and they did not believe in it. Adults were not asked a personal question, about whether they were afraid of witchcraft, in view of the complications of having to answer to a white person. (A less personal question was asked, see below.) The questionnaire for the school children included this question. It was thought that it would be easier to answer it on paper than personally. The majority, 256 (82%) of the 311 students, said that they were afraid of witchcraft. The proportion of students who claimed not to fear witchcraft was largest among Catholic high school students in Muzi-Pela (21 of 59 students) and Catholic Goma children (5 of 14). Of all students, 68 (22%) said that they had been bewitched, some of them "many times". There were numerous answers where children had first written that they had been bewitched but afterwards crossed the statement, probably to censor sensitive information from me, a white woman. Even if the answers were not exhaustive, this survey showed that witchcraft was a persistent issue despite the claims of colonial and mission teaching.

When the locality of students was compared to the answers about being bewitched, there was a slight tendency for more rural children (Sezabo 40%, Ngbulanzabo [illegible], and Gerechabo 26%) to admit being bewitched than Nyankunde (10%) and urban children (Muzi-Pela 18%, Goma

21%) (Table 6).

Originally witchcraft among the Bira operated in the minimal lineage (consisting of four generations). An outsider who did not belong to the lineage had no power to harm a member of that lineage. However, the women had the power to practice witchcraft against the members of their husband's lineage. Now several Bira lamented the fact that witchcraft was becoming capricious. One could not know where to look for a culprit, because anyone could bewitch anyone else. Although adults were not asked if they feared witchcraft, they were asked if the one who can bewitch another person must be a member of the family or if it could also be an outsider; the answers were divided roughly in half: 48% of parents said that a bewitcher must be a family member; 52% said that it can be an outsider, although some claimed that outsiders had limited power compared to a family member.

When schoolchildren were asked about the same subject, 72% of them stated that the person to bewitch another one must be a family member; 28% claimed that it could also be an outsider.

When both parents' and children's answers were compared to the locality in the order of most rural to most urban, there was some trend among the urban people to state that outsiders practiced witchcraft against them and conversely, for rural people to state that bewitchers were family members. In parents' answers, 100% of the Goma parents claimed that the bewitcher was an outsider; 60% of Muzi-Pela, 28% of Nyankunde, 47% of Gerechabo, 53% of Ngbulanzabo and Sezabo parents claimed so. In children's answers, 86% of the Goma children, 24% of Muzi-Pela, 37% of Nyankunde, 16% of Gerechabo, 30% of

Table 6. The Relationship Between Being Bewitched and Locality of the Children.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulan-zabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| never bewitched | 27<br>60% | 24<br>73% | 29<br>74% | 53<br>90% | 99<br>82% | 11<br>79% |
| bewitched | 18<br>40% | 9<br>27% | 10<br>26% | 6<br>10% | 22<br>18% | 3<br>21% |

(Cramer's V 0.22)

Ngbulanzabo, and 14% of Sezabo children said that the bewitcher was an outsider. (Cramer's V is 0.39 for the parents and 0.34 for the children, Tables 7 and 8).

When children's religion (Catholic or Protestant) was compared to the claim of a potential bewitcher being an outsider to a family, there was a pattern indicating that more Protestant children (59%) than Catholic children (25%) claimed that an outsider was a bewitcher (Phi 0.23, Table 9). This fits with the picture of Protestant Christians as being more removed from overt expressions of tradition than Catholic Christians.

When sex of the student was compared to the claim of the relationship of the bewitcher to the family, no significant association was found. Thus boys and girls appeared to experience witchcraft in the same way.

The students were asked to write an example of a case in which the person him/herself or a member of their family was bewitched. They were asked to explain who the bewitching person was, why he/she bewitched someone, and whether or how the bewitched was healed. Out of 311 students, 71 (23%) wrote an example. The details were not always filled in systematically. About a quarter of the examples omitted the information about the bewitcher. Three fourths of the examples claimed that the bewitcher was a family member, a grandparent, a father's sister, father's brother, or once only, a mother's brother. (Mother's relatives were generally seen as benevolent). In witchcraft, the Bira were similar to the Tiv of Nigeria (Bohannan 1969, Vol ii:212) and the Bwamba of Uganda (Winter 1963) in which the enemy is seen as a close

Table 7. A Potential Bewitcher's Relationship to the Locality in Parents' Answers.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulanzabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| outsider | 8<br>53% | 8<br>53% | 7<br>47% | 7<br>28% | 15<br>60% | 10<br>100% |
| family | 7<br>47% | 7<br>47% | 8<br>53% | 18<br>72% | 10<br>40% | - |

(Cramer's V 0.39)

Table 8. A Potential Bewitcher's Relationship to the Locality in Children's Answers.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulanzabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| outsider | 6<br>14% | 8<br>30% | 6<br>16% | 21<br>37% | 26<br>24% | 12<br>86% |
| family | 37<br>86% | 19<br>70% | 31<br>84% | 35<br>62% | 83<br>76% | 2<br>14% |

(Cramer's V 0.34)

Table 9. The Relationship Between Religion and a Potential Bewitcher in Children's Answers.

| | Catholic | Protestant |
|---|---|---|
| outsider | 61<br>25% | 17<br>59% |
| family | 188<br>76% | 12<br>41% |

(Phi 0.23)

kinsman. This contrasts to the witchcraft reported among the Navaho (Kluckhohn 1944:61) among whom the witches are outsiders to the society.

Among the Bira, old people were often suspected of witchcraft in the children's examples. It is not possible to assess which sex is suspected most because the Swahili (or Bira) word for grandparents does not differentiate sex; but both sexes were involved. It is noteworthy that the suspect belonged all but once to an older generation, either parents' or grandparents'. This is interesting because a third of the students stated that a person being able to bewitch another one did not necessarily need to be an older person but could be a child. The adults were not asked this systematically, but several of them stated that witchcraft did not necessarily depend on the age of a person. Indeed, once I heard a man's death being addressed to witchcraft by his daughter of about 13 years.

Adults were not systematically asked if they had been bewitched, but from the several localities visited a total of 45 cases were mentioned by informants or other Bira. In addition, there were several incidents of witchcraft among non-Bira which aroused Bira interest. Three of the Bira cases may have concerned sorcery (harmful activity against fellow beings with tangible objects), although it was hard to know when the Bira talked about tangible poison and when invisible poison.

The Bira did not always say who was suspected, but in those cases in which suspects were stated, both family members and outsiders were involved. It is clear that among the Bira today, both sexes are capable of being suspected of witchcraft, although traditionally the Southern Bira had only female witches and the Northern Bira had only male witches. Also, co-wives or a spouse's lovers were thought of as being able to bewitch a person. In the villages, witchcraft operated among close kin. In Goma, where kinship ties had broken down in general, total strangers were suspected of witchcraft.

For both children and adults, jealousy and hurt feelings were believed to be the motivations for witchcraft. Jealousy could concern another person's wealth, either money, cattle, or children, other possessions, health, success, or education. Co-wives bewitched each other because of jealousy of their husband's love; wives bewitched their husband's mistresses. A woman in Goma stated that someone passing by in the street saw her dancing happily in her yard and bewitched her. Soon afterwards she gave birth to twin rats and has never since been able to bear children. A woman in a village said that it was wise to take a pot of hot oil away from the fire when pouring meat in it lest someone passing by the house could hear the splashing of hot oil and be jealous of the wealth of the family being able to afford oil. There were many cases where someone of the lineage did not receive the bridewealth expected and avenged his hard feelings by witchcraft. A few children stated that the reason for witchcraft towards them by a family member was their refusal to run an errand for them, i.e., disobedience. Similarly, an old lady claimed that she tried to watch her words and not scold her grandchildren too much or she might be accused of witchcraft if one of the children became ill. The ideal of the Bira society was material equality, obedience of children to parents, and peaceful relations. People tried to conform to this ideal because of fear of witchcraft. When calamities occured, witchcraft was assumed, because there was always the likelihood that people did not live up to the ideal.

The children's examples and other cases showed that usually illness provoked suspicions about witchcraft: a sore or swollen arm, finger, or stomach, sore neck, blind eye, sudden numbness, or, very typically, the paralysis of one half of the body. Also, if a bolt of lightning struck someone, it was thought of as being caused by witchcraft. Sickness was not the only area where witchcraft forces were thought to operate. It was suggested among adults, both in a village and at the Catholic mission station, that juvenile thieves, whom everyone knew, were thieves because of being bewitched; the young men were not really responsible for their thieving activities. It was said that the urge to steal "fell upon them and they startled and left to steal". Witchcraft, then, could change individual personality, and the person affected was not to be blamed, but the person bewitching him.

How were people healed from witchcraft? Although fragmentary, there was enough information to suggest that, in many cases, the issue was dealt with in a traditional fashion. "My father went and really scolded my grandparent." "The 'wakubwa', elders of the village, judged him". Diffuse sanctions worked. Someone in the family had to become aggressive and extract a confession from the suspect. His anger protected him from further witchcraft. A confession was induced by severe beatings or threats of death, "If the sick person dies, you will die as well." Then the guilty one submitted to spitting on medicine, which was used to treat the sick person. Sometimes a diviner was still used in identifying the guilty one.

Some children answered that they were healed by going to the hospital. Some said that they were helped by both hospital treatment and the medicine from the guilty person (the traditional way). Some stated specifically that the (counter) medicine of a "munganga kisi" (native doctor) alone healed them. Thus, there was no attempt to go back to the suspect. In 1981, I observed a traditional healer (a Ugandan immigrant) in Goma giving treatment to a sick boy whose sickness he had diagnosed as being witchcraft by the boy's father's brother. I asked if the healer would not consider going back to the suspect to aid in healing. He said that it would be too complicated.

One of the fathers whose son was a thief told me that he had spent much money seeing different native doctors in the hope of healing his son's urge to steal. None of them had been successful. The father lamented that these days it was very hard to know which was good because among them there were many bad ones. Truly good doctors, so he had heard, lived quite far away on the way to Kisangani, and it would cost too much to travel and use their expensive services.

Some western medical knowledge has been adapted to the Bira thinking, judging from such statements as: "Sickness comes from dust" or "sickness comes from microbes". But an educated Bira stated, "White man's medicine cannot touch a disease caused by witchcraft." She had previously had a personal experience where a western hospital had not healed her but a native healer had. During the field work, her own daughter became seriously ill; she insisted that careful tests at Nyankunde Protestant hospital be done. When the daughter then died, she was inclined to think that the death was due to witchcraft. Western medical thinking has not wiped out the traditional Bira explanation of illness.

Although people were quick to say that God protected them from witchcraft, I got the impression that God's protection was wrapped in great uncertainty. There were only two cases in which Bira prayed to God forcefully to deliver them from witchcraft. This contrasts to the reports on several revivalist movements in different parts of Africa where the members of these churches were said to have been given special protection power against witchcraft (Bond et al. 1979).

If traditional witchcraft cases were regularly solved with the guilty one participating in the healing process or by killing him/her if the person died, many present-day cases reported to me stayed unresolved. There were several instances where a Bira had been in a distant area, had been bewitched and became sick there. The family had brought him home but could not press charges against anyone, not knowing with whom their relative had been in contact in the distant place. Also, where assumed witchcraft happened locally, the suspect often ran away. Many went to Kasenyi or mining areas where people were difficult to find. So the western way of life brought by colonialism prevented effective traditional sanctions.

Often Bira said that they could not revive the deceased, so they were not going to get after anyone. Villagers who wanted to avoid confrontations tried to comfort a bereaved family by saying, "Don't think of witchcraft. Other children die, too, not only yours, and they are not bewitched. It is God's will." A woman who lost her daughter thought of witchcraft but she said, "What can I do? I just leave the matter to God." The traditional way had changed. This was revealed by a remark a woman made, "In the old days, the guilty ones gave their spit, nowadays the chief makes them pay". Paying money to the chief is entirely different from the traditional way of participating in the healing process. Many healers gave medicine without bothering to contact the person who bewitched the sick one. And, after all, the traditional way of giving saliva was no longer a guarantee of restored relationships. A woman hit by a bolt of lightening, which was presumably sent by her father's brother, was continuously complaining about the grudge her uncle still held against her even after giving his saliva. She said that the only way to be safe from him was to move further away from him. Moving away was not feasible before colonial times (because of the inter-clan hostility), but since then people have been able to escape responsibility and confrontation by moving away.

Although white people have tried to give the impression that they did not believe in witchcraft and magic, many Bira could not imagine the world without it. Therefore, they saw white people as also being involved with them. An educated Bira woman claimed that the black people had black magic, but white people had white magic. White people did some uncomprehensive things which made Bira think they were doing magic. She told a story about a houseboy in Bunia whose employer took his family every Sunday to a mountain. In my thinking, he must have taken them for a picnic, but the houseboy had other thoughts. One day the houseboy had asked the son of his master about it, and the son had told them that they entered a mountain through a door. The houseboy had tried going through doors, one after the other, with the help of a password which the son had given him until at one door he was returned home with the words, "Go home for there is no place for you here".

Similarly, at Ngbulanzabo, a family asked me about white people's habit of climbing the Rwenzori mountain. It was incomprehensible to them that people would "waste their food" just for curiosity and the feeling of conquering difficulties. Surely, the Bira said, they were going to get "it", meaning magic, power, or force (similar to Tempel's (1959) notion of force). They asked me to tell them what the noises coming from the mountain were. When I did not know, they interpreted my answer as a refusal to pass my knowledge of magic to them, "Of course, you will not tell us."

White people used to go and see a high waterfall near Sezabo. The Bira family thought about it in the same magical fashion. A missionary wanted to buy land to build a cottage for rest near the waterfall, but he was hastily told that there was no land available. The Bira thought that with this way of going to the mountain and water, and perhaps with the peculiar habit of sunbathing, the white people had acquired powerful magic which was then demonstrated in their awesome deeds, such as being able to fly airplanes even in the dark of the night (witches travel at night), being able to stay under water for hours, being able to fix machinery that no black man had been able to, and being able to acquire from God all the things that the heart could desire. White people supposedly had magical skills to pass exams of great difficulty. My western explanation of hard study did not gain any support among Bira listeners. They claimed that white people had magical pens whose users would pass any exam without any study. Some white people from Rethy (a Protestant mission station) occasionally sold such pens, so they had heard, but these pens were extremely expensive.

It was common for the Bira to wear protective "medicine" against sickness or to bring good luck to the user. Mothers would buy these for their infants to wear on their waists or wrists. These were shells, seed pods, sticks, or powdered medicine wrapped in a cloth. Youngsters going to dig gold bought medicine to bring themselves good luck. It was expensive; some of them said they had to pay a cow. But then they would have great luck. If a person found a big lump of gold and a man standing next to him did not find any, the first one surely had had a charm which worked. When asked if they could get luck by praying to God, they said that it was true that God gave them strength to live and dig gold, but specific luck came from medicine.

Traditionally, food gardens were protected by magic which was demonstrated by supernatural "medicine", which was tied in a knot of grass in the middle of a field, visible to everyone. I saw a few such knots. People lamented that such medicine had lost its power. In the old days, a snake would curl around a thief's neck but now it did not always happen. Some people laughed and said that no one believed in them any more.

The above discussion has shown that the Bira were largely thinking about witchcraft in the old ways but that the old ways did not work as well as in the past. Equally, the new ways of the white man were not clear to the Bira. White men denied the value of Bira witchcraft and magic. It was thought that white people withheld some information about magic from the Bira in order to have exclusive access to the miraculous world. The Bira were denied the powerful magic of the white man because they were not able to obtain the white man's wealth.

## Bira Christianity

Traditionally Bira believed in a supreme and benevolent God, Mbali, who had created the world and everything in it and continued to sustain life. However, this God had removed himself and was not concerned with trivialities of everyday life. Although he was the originator of all force in the world, he stayed in the periphery of Bira religious thought (Constance-Marie 1947, Joset 1936 in Van Geluwe 1956). Instead, as shown above, the traditional social controls of the Bira were in the realm of ancestors and witchcraft and in lieu of any governmental structure as well.

Missionaries presented the Christian God as a creator and life giver, but also as actively involved in everyday lives of individuals. Both Catholic and Protestant missionaries forsook ancestors and whichcraft that were important in maintaining social order among the Bira and brought a peripheral matter from their traditional system into the centre of the new religion: the idea of supreme God. The Bira God, "Mbali", became the Christian God, and faith in him was expected to maintain social order and morality in the church. Attributes of the Christian God were taught to the Bira; some of these attributes were already familiar to them, namely God as a creator and sustainer of life. The attribute of God as morally good was entirely new to the Bira. Doctrines about God's punishment of wrongdoing here in life or after death, of salvation through Christ, of eternal life in heaven or hell had no parallel in Bira religious understanding. It is my argument that the specifically Christian attributes of God are hardly perceived by the majority of the Bira, who still interpret the Christian God largely through their traditional understanding of the supreme being. This understanding does not consist of a wide enough spectrum of social control to reinforce social order and morality, given that the traditional agents for these areas of life have already been undermined by Christianity.

In addition to the questionnaires for school children and the interviews with parents, which were designed to obtain information about indigenous views on the Christian God, I also recorded spontaneous sayings about God. All these sources were consistent. A couple of Bira exressed the idea of an otiose God by saying literally that God was far away and, therefore, it was hard for humans to know particularities about him. A few Bira said that they did not know the affairs of God before the missions came. They only knew the name of God but did not know where he was. A middle aged Bira woman pointed out to me that she was illiterate and could not read about God's affairs. However, as she stated, she was living from the force of God, which is a traditional view of Mbali.

When asked if God was watching over us, 100% of the parents interviewed and 98% of the schoolchildren answered in the affirmative. When asked if they feared God, 92% of the parents and 88% of the school children said yes. When reasons for fearing God were asked, the answers were revealing, since most of them (82% of the children and 67% of the parents) referred to the qualities of the Bira supreme god as a creator or sustainer of life or force-giver rather than to Christian ideas of God, e.g., as a punisher of sin. (Tempels (1959) has described Bamba and Baluba ideas of supreme God as the "vital force".) Even more revealing is that those few parents who answered that they did not fear God gave the same reasons as those who answered in the affirmative, namely "because God created us". About one quarter (24%) of the parents and 16% of the children gave a Christian explanation, such as God does not like sin or God punishes. There was no clear association between the type of answers and the locality.

In Tables 10 and 11, "Christian answers" are those which refer to fear of God because of sin or punishment, or because "God sees everything". These answers reflect missionary teaching about the attributes of God. "Traditional answers" are those which refer to God's creative and sustaining force. The Bira had these beliefs of the Supreme Being before the introduction of Christianity. So called "between" answers are those that mention something from both categories or something that does not make sense in terms of either category (as: "I die every day").

Table 10. The Reasons for Fearing God and the Affiliation of Parents with a Catholic or Protestant Church.

| | Catholic | Protestant |
|---|---|---|
| Traditional answers | 59<br>85% | 13<br>39% |
| Between answers | 4<br>6% | 1<br>3% |
| Christian answers | 6<br>9% | 19<br>58% |

(Cramer's V 0.53)

Table 11. The Reasons for Fearing God in the Answers of the Catholic and Protestant Children.

| | Catholic | Protestant |
|---|---|---|
| Traditional answers | 219<br>83% | 17<br>57% |
| Between answers | 13<br>5% | 5<br>17% |
| Christian answers | 33<br>13% | 8<br>27% |

(Cramer's V 0.20)

Parents' answers revealed an association between type of answers and religious affiliation (Cramer's V 0.53, Table 10): The majority of Catholics (85%) answered in a traditional way, while less than half of the Protestants (39%) did so. Conversely, the majority of Protestants (58%) answered in a Christian way, and only a few Catholics (9%). In both groups, only a minority answered mixing the two ways. In children's answers the difference between religious groups was not as great as in parents' answers (Cramer's V 0.20 Table 11). The majority of both Catholic and Protestant children gave a traditional reason for fearing God. However, more Catholic (83%) than Protestant (57%) children did so. Protestant children (27%) did not give Christian answers as readily as their parents (58%). I have not been able to find an explanation for this phenomenon.

As the Bira often compared the relationship of parents and their children to that of God and his children, I asked which was more severe, God or parents. The majority of answers (66% of children and 82% of parents) stated that God was more severe. In children's answers, there was no clear association between the type of the answer and the locality (Cramer's V 0.17), but parents' answers revealed an association (Cramer's V 0.46). Fifty four percent of parents living in Goma and 60% of parents living at Muzi-Pela claimed that God is more severe than parents, as compared to 100% of parents at Nyankunde and Gerechabo, 86% at Ngbulanzabo and 87% at Sezabo (Table 12).

When asked why God was more severe than parents, the answers revealed again attributes of Bira world view: God is more severe because he puts us in the world, because he has power over us, because

Table 12. Parent's Answers to Greater Severity of God or Parents and the Locality of the Parents.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulanzabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Parents | 2 | 2 | - | - | 10 | 5 |
| | 13% | 14% | | | 40% | 45% |
| God | 13 | 12 | 15 | 23 | 15 | 6 |
| | 87% | 86% | 100% | 100% | 60% | 54% |

(Cramer's V 0.46)

he created even parents, because he is our caretaker, and because he will take our life. These are all characteristics of the traditional supreme being and acknowledge his force in creation rather than his force as a punisher. A minority (9%) of parents' answers referred to a Christian aspect of fear of God, namely to the idea of God as justice: God is more severe because he does not want us to do bad things, or because he judges us at the end of our life. Those adults who claimed that parents were more severe than God contrasted the parents as punishers of mischievous children to God as patient and forgiving.

When asked if God punishes or forgives a wrongdoer, more children's answers were on the side of God's punishment (66% of school children) than forgiveness. (No associations were found to religion, sex, or locality of the students.) Parents' answers were a little different: 34% stated that God would punish, 16% said that God would not punish here but after death, 22% claimed that a person cannot know about God's punishment, and 28% stated that God forgives. When asked how God punishes, there was much confusion on the subject. Many adults claimed that it was impossible to know how God punishes, even though they had been of the opinion that God does punish. A Protestant pastor stated that God's whipping is in hiding, meaning that the person being "whipped" by God does not know that he is being whipped. Thus, the Bira conclude that the effects of God cannot be identified. A fair portion of children (41%) and some parents (14%) said that God punishes by giving sickness, handicap, famine or drought. Further investigation of the reasons for which people would be punished with such things provided no consistent explanation. Most adults did not think that these calamities fell on people for specific sins they might have committed; rather they fell because people were human and weak. When asked about illness, a Catholic woman told me that she would pray to God and ask for forgiveness for everything possible if she became ill. Furthermore, Catholics could go to confession and receive absolution.

Parents were asked: "If a person does not follow God's word, will God forgive him or punish him?". The answers were grouped in four categories: God forgives, one does not (or cannot) know, delayed punishment (after death), or punishment. These answers associated somewhat (Cramer's V 0.37, Table 13) with the religious affiliation of parents, with a larger group of Protestants (46%) claiming God's punishment than Catholics (28%), and Catholics (32%) claiming that one does not or cannot know as compared to few Protestants (3%). However, the meaning of the differences was reduced with further interviewing ("God's whip is hidden).

Although there is a trend in parents' answers according to the religious affiliation, to me the difference seems to be in phraseology rather than in content. If the Protestants were more willing to say that God punishes, but then said that God's whip is in hiding (by a Protestant pastor), is there much practical difference from the Catholic statements? They might as well all have answered: One cannot know. I talked to a Protestant man who had been active in church life but then dropped out. He told me what he had learned about second judgement after death. What had impressed him was that a person's deeds would be burnt but, what was more important, the person himself

Table 13. Types of Parent's Answers to the Question: "If a person does not follow God's word, will God forgive him or punish him?" and the Religious Affiliation.

| | Catholic | Protestant |
|---|---|---|
| Forgive | 20<br>29% | 9<br>26% |
| Do not know<br>(one cannot know) | 22<br>32% | 1<br>3% |
| Delayed punishment<br>(after death) | 8<br>12% | 9<br>26% |
| Punishment | 19<br>28% | 16<br>46% |

(Cramer's V 0.37)

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would be saved if he believed in Jesus. This was a more comfortable belief than dealings with Sakana, who was merciless. The man was living now with several women for whom he had not paid bridewealth, to the annoyance of his lineage. The man followed neither tradition nor Christian faith. The latter had given him the safeguard for liberty.

I also asked for some examples of God's punishment from adults' and children's lives or other people's lives. Children's answers differed from those of parents in that children were able to give more examples about God's punishment; some (11%) even illustrated from their own lives. Parents had fewer examples and none whatsoever about their own lives. They rather answered in the vein that all people make mistakes, all are sinners. God forgives rather than punishes, since if he punished there would be no people left in this world. One woman stated that "God has empty eyes", which I interpret as meaning that God does not react to what he sees. There were very few examples where parents stated a certain person had become handicapped after committing e.g. witchcraft. There were few adults who told me that they were suffering from God's punishment. When asked for what sin, they were surprised at the question: "For no sin". God just brought the hardship on them for some mysterious reason. That was their lot as humans. So the apparent causation, punishment of sin, turned out not to be significant.

The readiness of children to see God's punishment could be explained in two ways: first that the Christian message of God as punishing sin has been understood by children, while parents are more traditional and cannot grasp the supreme God as the agent of justice.

The second explanation is that children, being under their parents' discipline, would attribute similar features to God as to their parents. Once they became adults they would see God differently. I prefer the latter explanation, because even young parents in their early 20's (of equal age to some of the secondary school children) did not see God as punishing, though the children did.

The question "what is the benefit in believing in God?" caused as much puzzlement as the question about God's punishment. Parents were startled that such a question could be even asked, and some had no answer. Many other answers were not answers to the question but described a Christian practice such as, "to go to church", "to pray to God", "to be baptized", and the like. These answers, together with such answers as "living in peace and love with your neighbor", "We will have a good spirit", "spirit of love", "gives us blessing", "brother of Jesus Christ", "One will not have sin" and alike, were classified as "Christian answers". To the Bira, believing in God is the only explanation of life because God created everyone. The great bulk of the answers were traditional, focusing on God's creating and sustaining powers.

Special attention should be given to those answers which deal with eternal life. A sizable portion of children and parents answered that the benefit of believing in God related to eternal life (48% of the children and 46% of the parents). This answer shows that many Bira have learned Christian teaching. This answer was associated with the Protestant faith in both groups of respondents: 74% of the Protestant parents answered that eternal life was the benefit in believing in God as compared to 32% of the Catholic parents. On the other hand, 54% of the Catholic parents gave a traditional thought about God as a benefit in belief, as compared to 6% of the Protestant parents (Cramer's V 0.48, Table 14). The difference between the answers of the Catholic and Protestant children was not as significant as among adults, although a similar trend can be observed: 71% of the Protestant children answered that eternal life was the benefit of believing in God as compared to 45% of the Catholics; 40% of the Catholics gave a traditional attribute of God as the benefit of believing in him, as opposed to 19% of Protestants (Table 15).

However, although Protestants had learned their lesson well, when pressed further, there was not much information. Eternal life was the response but without further elaboration. In the literature about African traditional religion, it has been stressed that afterlife, e.g., in West African thinking, is not perceived as better than present life and that Christian teaching about a better state of existence has not captured the imagination of Africans (Horton 1984, Uchendu 1964). An active Protestant church member emphasized that there was no other benefit in believing in God than eternal life. Without enthusiasm about eternal life, it appeared that there was not much benefit in Christianity.

Likewise, those children (34%) and parents (25%) who answered the question "How does God punish?" with "punishment after death", were very vague about it. Many stated that they did not know anything else. I did not get the impression that the threat of eternal punishment kept anyone from doing what he/she intended to.

Table 14. The Religious Affiliation and the Parents' Type of Answer to the Question: "What is the benefit in believing in God?"

| | Catholic | Protestant |
|---|---|---|
| traditional answers | 37<br>54% | 2<br>6% |
| eternal life answers | 22<br>32% | 26<br>74% |
| Christian answers | 10<br>14% | 7<br>20% |

(Cramer's V 0.48)

Table 15. The Religious Affiliation and the Type of Children's Answers to the Questions: "What is the benefit in believing in God?"

| | Catholic | Protestant |
|---|---|---|
| traditional answer | 106<br>40% | 6<br>19% |
| eternal life answer | 119<br>45% | 22<br>71% |
| Christian answer | 40<br>15% | 3<br>10% |

(Cramer's V 0.16)

The Bira know about Christian teaching of God's love and forgiveness of sins through Christ. Several described the change in the severity of God since Old Testament times into the loving God of the New Testament. When talking about punishment after death, a typical adult answer was that God may punish a little after death, but in the end he forgives. I conclude that the idea of a loving and forgiving God has fused with the idea of otiose God who did not care about trivialities of every day life.

The Bira go eagerly to church. Both Catholic and Protestant churches are full each Sunday. The Bira emphasize that they are no longer pagans but Christians. Churches provide ritual and entertainment, and the message is perceived as pleasant fortification for the old perception of the creator, sustainer God. If we compare traditional beliefs to present day beliefs, we might conclude that it is more comfortable now than during those days when people had to fear ancestor spirits and Sakana's beatings. Other than their spiritual message, missions brought many benefits, such as schools, professions, employment, hospitals with good medicine, and, above all, material goods. Old Bira see white people as favorite children of God, to whom he gives everything that their hearts may desire, leaving the Bira with empty hands, although they have followed the orders of the missionaries and left their ancestors. The desire for material goods recalls the Cargo cults in New Guinea. The Bira are disappointed that goods have not fallen in their hands automatically when they follow the rules of the missionaries. However, it has been noticed that by working for missions or affiliating with missionaries, one may receive such benefits as clothes, watches, tape-recorders, bicycles, radios, and, above all, houses with tin roofs, the ultimate goal for many long term workers.

There are many reports of declining moral standards in traditional societies after the arrival of Christianity (Messenger 1959, Vilakazi 1962, Bascom 1953, Hutchinson 1957, Hvalkof and Aaby 1981). This has happened among the Bira in many areas. For example, an old Protestant evangelist preached one Sunday and reminisced about his youth. He had grown up in a family of seven sons; none of them had made any girls pregnant before getting married, although they had been heathen, as he said. It has been observed that illegitimate pregnancies have increased; adultery and divorce are common among the Christians, even though it was not so before. Women stated that their mothers used to fear the curse of ancestors if they left their husbands. When looking at the changes which have happened in village composition, one can infer that young girls were protected from suitors by the structure of the clan villages; it was impossible to meet eligible spouses. Young people had no need to leave their home villages, since there were no schools or markets and villages were self sufficient. Adult members of families chose spouses for their children. The morality of the adults was protected by structural segregation of sexes from public occasions to home life (where living areas of women and men were defined). With colonization, population centres and markets were created; mixing of clans and tribes became the norm. With the building of roads, it was easy for anyone to move from place to place. Even secluded villages became infiltrated by outsiders, as we have seen in the sample villages. Thus, eligible spouses could be met personally by young people. With westernization, including missionization, free socializing between sexes in schools and church activities, e.g., choirs, has broken down the traditional segregation of sexes. As the Bira are not used to internal controls, which are implicit in the Puritanic world view, the new freedom has become detrimental to sexual morality. It does not help the Bira to see the missionaries' example, because misunderstandings arise. White people's sexual norms seem too loose to Bira.

Protestantism has been associated with the economic development of the western capitalism (e.g., Weber 1958). Fromm (1941) argued that the Reformation freed the individual from the authority of the Catholic church. Instead of dependency on the church for absolution from sin, Protestants were now directly responsible to God. They were expected to work for the glory of God. The emphasis on work and reinvestment of savings contributed to the growth of western capitalism. While some Protestant Bira have been able to accumulate a limited amount of wealth, it does not seem that this derives from any indoctrination into the Protestant conception of conscience and work.

Protestant missionaries have encouraged their converts to work. Zairean Christians have been given jobs at the mission station. Faithful service has been rewarded with western gifts, which may have encouraged private business. Furthermore, missionaries have encouraged entrepreneurial activity by giving loans or equipment and providing markets for trade. For instance, missionaries have helped Zairean Christians to start a photograph business by supplying them with materials from other countries. Brethren pastors have used bicycles, given as gifts for evangelical work at church, as transporters of their trade items. Those pastors at Ngbulanzabo who started growing food in large quantities had a reliable market at the mission station to provide for the medical boarding school. It may not be a coincidence that the two first tin roofs at Ngbulanzabo, as opposed to the traditional thatched roofs, and the two first motor vehicles at Ngbulanzabo, were owned by Protestant pastors. Missionaries have also withdrawn their economic support when their converts have left the Christian way of life as taught by the church, as in the case of dishonesty or of many Zairean Christians who have decided to use their accumulated wealth to obtain secondary wives.

If the early Protestant Christians in European history were driven by a scrupulous conscience (and the importance of individual conscience is greatly emphasized in the Protestant mission teaching in Zaire), this teaching does not seem to have left a deep impression on the Bira. Thievery is very common in population centres, although less so in villages (cf. Chapter Five). There is no indication that Protestants are less involved than others. In fact, among the studied families, some children of active Protestant as well as Catholic church members were considered chronic thieves. Zairean Protestant church personnel are not thought by most Bira to be honest with money. Protestant Christian nurses sell medicine stolen from mission hospitals in the villages. If caught, they are immediately dismissed by the mission. The Zaireans may not see the issue in terms of honesty but making a living; the missionaries consider it a matter of honesty.

This relaxed attitude towards honesty (in western terms) shows also in the corrupt governmental, judical, and economical state structures, which are, however, predominantly occupied by Catholic people. In the Bira area, Protestant missionaries were looking forward to the administration of a young Protestant chief of a collectivity who hopefully would rule honestly and uphold Christian virtues. After a few years of the particular chief in the office, they resigned themselves to a more usual running of affairs which the missionaries did not consider exemplary for Christian living.

If a parallel to this is to be found in European history, it could be the pre-Protestant stage. Fromm (Ibid.:65) described the initial breaking up of the feudal system in Europe as accompanied by a stage of chaotic freedom: passionate egocentricity and insatiable greed for power and wealth. Europeans were freed from the bondage of the feudal system; the Bira were freed from the strict control of their ancestors. While it was previously believed that a bolt of lightning would hit a thief, it is now observed that many thieves stay unharmed and prosper. The new freedom coupled with seemingly enormous amount of wealth displayed by westerners in Zaire, has created a situation of insatiable striving for wealth regardless of means. The traditional idea of the otiose God has helped to advance this way of life. The Christian forgiving God is not so far from the otiose God as it may seem: As it does not matter to the otiose God if people do right or wrong, so "wrong" does not really matter to the Bira Christian God, because all is forgiven anyhow. Both the otiose and the Bira Christian God continue to sustain life to all creatures on earth no matter what their moral standing. This view may find support in the Bible statement that the sun rises on the evil as well as on the good and the rain falls on the just as well as the unjust; but, according to the western Christian theology, it does not mean that God does not care if people do wrong.

God is believed in by everyone; there is no other explanation for life in Bira thinking. Because God is seen as benign and forgiving, and his punishment either impossible to discern or happening sometime in the distant future, Bira are more relaxed about their social behavior now than before, when ancestors' wrath could fall upon them. However, excommunication from church communion or from sacraments will follow after breaking church rules. Church discipline may be influential as a shame sanction, but often allegations are interpreted as tribal competition or jealousy for material advantages or prestigeous positions at the mission station. There is a difference between church discipline and family discipline. For instance, if a girl becomes pregnant while still unmarried, her parents and elders beat her severely until she reveals her lover's name. At church, however, the elders do not beat but ask for a name. It happened over and over that the girl was able to withhold the name to protect her lover in his job at the mission station (as revealed to me by a girl involved). Formerly thievery was prevented by magic, so that a person would fall ill automatically after committing an act of thievery. Now magic is not felt to work as efficiently any more.

The daily lives of most Bira are not greatly changed by belief in the Christian God. However, there are exceptions: a few Protestant pastors, church elders, and some individual women, and, of course, Catholic sisters, see their Christianity as a choice opposed to tradition.

Earlier, disputes were settled in lineages, now they are increasingly becoming a matter for village chiefs or higher chiefs. The church tries to settle the disputes of its members. However, the reputation of the church is to be lenient. The purpose of the church is seen by the Bira as forgiving. A confession is required by the Catholic church for sins committed. The Plymouth Brethren church requires a public confession for a discovered scandal, followed by a temporary dismissal from communion. This contrasts to the justice practiced elsewhere. At chief's courts a culprit is beaten; teachers punish stubborn students by beating them, and parents beat children for their disobedience. In the past, Sakana was said to have savagely beaten recalcitrant children. Against this background, church discipline seems lenient indeed.

In conclusion, with Christianity and the simultaneous arrival of colonial rule, many changes were brought to Bira traditions. The supreme being who used to occupy a peripheral position in the Bira religious system was brought to the centre of the new religious system. Belief in ancestors and witchcraft, which used to control social behavior, was now banned. Despite continuous teaching of the attributes of the Christian God, the Bira conceive him mainly in traditional terms as the supreme being, as a creator and sustainer of life. His creative force is greatly respected, and he is considered benevolent and understanding. Despite some differences between

Catholic and Protestant answers to questions about God, further interviewing revealed that the differences were mostly in phraseology rather than in meaning. There was a sense of rote memorization rather than internalization of Christian ideology. There is, however, some practical difference in entrepreneurial activity between the leading members of the denominations, with Protestants achieving somewhat more material wealth than Catholics, which may refer to internalization of Protestant work ethic.

The Bira view of God is fairly uniform among people. God's attribute as distributing justice is peripheral in the understanding of the majority of the Bira. The homogenous ideology does not necessarily produce equally homogenous behavior: the following chapters will demonstrate that differences in behavior emerge. The uniform ideology is under some stress, most obviously in more urban areas. Childhood relationships are relatively conservative, safe from different ideological forces from outside. And, of course, Christian missions agree with the Bira ideal of obedience of children to their parents. The differences between ideology and behavior increase in adolescence. The adult world, although not the main focus of this study, is in a state of behavioral confusion due to the lack of traditional social controls, culminating in chaos in the governmental and economic realms. It is in the contrast between the ideology and the social structure that the variation in folk-urban communities shows the process of Bira culture change to proceed at different rates. Children do not experience the changes but adolescents are affected by them depending on the position of their locality on the continuum.

# CHAPTER SEVEN: OBEDIENCE IN THE PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSIP

## Characteristics of Bira Childrearing

All Bira adults desire children. As my earlier interviews with parents revealed (Warkentin 1985), it brings satisfaction for adults to know that they have produced offspring who will live when the parents die. A woman's value is estimated on the basis of the number of children she has borne. She is regarded as a "bad woman" if she has not borne a single child. A man rejoices that his lineage is continuing when he has his own children. Having children is a great joy and a matter of pride to Bira parents.

Some Goma parents expressed their concern about the material welfare of their children in the harsh urban conditions (Ibid.:82), but, nevertheless, they produced as many children as "God gave them". There was no association between the locality and the number of children in the interviewed families. As mentioned in the First Chapter, LeVine and White (1986) stated that, in Sub-Saharan Africa, poor soil, unreliable rainfall and shifting cultivation with hand-held hoe create an intense demand for routine labor, including that of young children. The need for child labor is obvious in the rural areas, but the same ideal remains in crowded urban conditions where children have become a liability.

Parents were apprehensive about the dangers of complications in giving birth. Earlier, according to Constance-Marie (1947:97), when the delivery was imminent, sacrifices were offered to ancestors by the elders of the lineage, and the ancestors' help in the delivery was asked for. Traditionally, women delivered at their husband's hut or went back to their childhood home. Because of the new medical facilities, it is now possible to choose to deliver in dispensaries or maternities. In 1981, I recorded the places of birth of all the children of 20 families at Ngbulanzabo and in Goma. Sixty-three percent of the Goma children had been born in a dispensary or maternity compared to 42% of Ngbulanzabo children (Warkentin 1985:120). Often, women started their journey to the maternity only when the contractions had commenced. In towns, they were able to arrive in time for delivery, but in rural areas where they might have to walk 15 kilometers or more, they often bore the child on the way.

Traditionally, a mother and her infant stayed in seclusion for four days if the infant was a boy, and three days if it was a girl. Then there was a naming ceremony during which the infant was brought out of the hut, blessed with a special herbal preparation, given a name and a tool, typical of its sex. This tradition was still common in rural areas. If a child was born in a Protestant maternity (Nyankunde), it had to be given a name on the day of the dismissal from the hospital to obtain the birth certificate. So those women who delivered there did not follow the traditional naming ceremony. In Goma, it was the aim of the Bira families to have at least one child named in the traditional way. However, it took months rather than the customary time of three or four days to save up the money for a feast.

Life is dangerous for children. Mothers are especially afraid of measles epidemics which occur annually and cause high mortality in the young. Many families lost their children to measles during the years of this research. In addition, meningitis and whooping cough are often deadly childhood diseases. In 1981, an inventory was taken of all the children born to 20 contemporary families at Ngbulanzabo and in Goma. In the Goma families, 26% of the children five years or under, had died. In the rural area, at Ngbulanzabo, 23% of the children had died (Warkentin 1985:139). The Nyankunde medical clinic reported that in 1976, out of the Ngbulanzabo infants attending the well baby clinics, 16% were undernourished, as opposed to 39% of Sezabo children. In 1982, the percentages were 25% at Ngbulanzabo, 22% at Nyankunde, 28% in Baywana (Gerechabo), and 15% in Bunia (Warkentin 1985:142). These figures reflect assessment by the medical staff with the arm circumference method (as explained by King et al. 1972).

Bodily contact between the caretaker and the infant is typical of Bira infant care, as is reported elsewhere in Africa. Rural (Ngbulanzabo) infants were kept in bodily contact with the caretaker a longer period (80% of the observation time during the daylight hours) than urban (Goma 63%) (Warkentin 1985:172). The mother was the main caretaker of an infant but her older children helped her in that work. Because of the responsibility of hoeing fields in 1979, rural mothers delegated more infant care to their older children (34%), usually girls, than urban mothers (16%) (Ibid.: 150). Infants were usually breast fed whenever they fussed or cried. They slept with their mother. Everyone talked to an infant with a special soft tone of voice. An infant was often pampered by being given what it wanted at the expense of older children. Once in a while, however, it was observed that a young caretaker was sufficiently frustrated with an infant that she teased or hurt it.

Weaning happened suddenly in one day. In the rural area (Ngbulanzabo), it occurred later, at the average of 26 months of age, than in the urban area (Goma), at 19 months (Ibid.:180). Urban mothers claimed that they weaned earlier than rural mothers, because in the city one had to live in "the white man's way". The weaned child was left more in the hands of a child caretaker in the rural area (55% of the daylight hours) than in the city (6%), while mothers in the village used 31% of the day and urban mothers 71% to care for their weaned toddler (Ibid. 166). A caretaker had a heavy responsibility on her hands. Because of this responsibility, many rural girls started school late, or often skipped days at school. Urban children were not requested to stay at home because of the childcare duties. Since most urban mothers distilled alcohol at home for their livelihood, they were near their children all day. With the help of the child caretakers, weaned infants were still held in physical contact, and the shock of weaning was softened. They usually continued to sleep close to the mother. When the next infant was born, they slept next to the new infant and the mother.

After weaning, children are gradually taught to do an increasing number of chores until they are able to do the same chores as adults. Both urban and rural children learn the Bira ideology of parent-child relationship, or "agrarian world view" (LeVine and White 1986) very young and it is well established by the time children go to school. This pattern is shown by the older children's answers to the questionnaire concerning their attitudes toward their parents. The next section will deal with these answers and also the actual behavior of the children in relation to their parents.

The Bira say that a child who has been obedient will get a spouse faster than others. The process of marriage reflects the obedience of the child to the parents, because, according to the tradition, the parents choose the spouse and direct all the marriage arrangements. A girl leaves her childhood village at the time of marriage, while a boy continues to live in it. His dependence and submission to his parents ideally continue, although not always in practice. The last chapter will deal with different aspects of the parent-child relationship in regard to marriage.

## Obedience and Reciprocity in the Parent-Child Relationship

This section deals with the importance of obedience and reciprocity in parent-child relationships. Compared to the religious issues discussed above, this area is a better preserved part of Bira traditions until the children reach adolescence. In my opinion, it is the most traditional pattern in the Bira culture, perhaps because these views were not challenged by westerners. Later sections will deal with the changes occurring in adolescent relations. This section is based mostly on the questionnaire given to the school children and on the interviews with parents, although sometimes general observations will be referred to.

A westerner may be impressed by the respectful behavior the children displayed toward their parents, and by their obedience to parents' commands. Children seem to accept happily their duties, even taking pride in carrying them out. This was regarded as a system of reciprocity between the Bira children and parents, fitting LeVine and White's (1986) description of agrarian concept of "virtue" (see Chapter One, "Parent-Child Relationship and Marriage Customs").

That obedience is important is shown by the answers to the question, "Do the children need to obey parents?": 100% of the children and 98% of the parents answered in the affirmative. When children were asked if they actually obeyed their parents, 97% claimed to do so. These answers reflect the ideal rather than real. A more particular question, "When your parents send you on an errand, do you need to go every time?" produced similarly high ideals: 98% of parents and 92% of the children answered in the affirmative. However, when parents were asked about their daughters' and sons' actual obedience, it was apparent that the reality did not exactly follow the ideal, although closely: parents reported that 87% of their daughters and 70% of their sons were obedient; the rest had had trouble in obedience at least sometimes. There was no relationship between the locality and children's obedience reported by their parents.

Observations in Goma and at Ngbulanzabo in 1979 showed that the village children obeyed 96% of their parents' requests while urban children obeyed 88% (Warkentin 1981). Rarely could one see an expression of resentment in the children's faces when they had been asked to run an errand. Later quotations from children will show that they considered a happy attitude an important part of running errands.

However, resentment was overtly expressed only four times during all the years of observation of hundreds of parents' requests! In 1979 in Goma, such an expression was observed, when a father sent his 14-year-old son to fetch his forgotten tool which was about a kilometer away. The son was playing with his toy truck and did not want to go, judging by his down-turned lips and wrinkled nose. But he did not say a word against the task and completed the errand, while his father sat comfortably chatting with neighbors. A similar case happened to teen-age girls, one in Goma and one at Ngbulanzabo: they were asked to take care of an infant sibling. The girls' faces turned sour, but they did the job. The fourth case was a 4-year-old boy at Gerechabo. His mother ordered him to interrupt his play and hold his infant brother; he did this with tears running down his cheeks.

There is one example of disobedience from Goma in 1979: A mother was washing dishes. Her 12-year-old son was playing marbles with his friend near-by. The mother called him and asked him to go and get sand at a water tap (some 200 meters away). She needed it to wash her pots. He did not react. Some time passed. The mother asked, "Did you hear me?" The son answered in the affirmative without stopping his play. After a while the mother said, "I am waiting!" Son answered, "Yes" and continued his game. The mother's patience was finished and she said, "Don't come!" She got up, walked towards the son and stopped. Pointing her fingers towards him she yelled angrily, "Don't come, don't come, don't come!" A neighbor girl had heard her request and brought some sand to her from the neighbor's stock. The son glanced at his mother and continued his game as if nothing had happened (Warkentin 1980:95).

A Bira man, when reminiscing about his childhood, mentioned it as an unpleasant fact that he had been sent to run errands in the rain. Parents and schoolchildren were asked if the children needed to run errands when it was raining. More children (74%) than parents (57%) claimed that they had to. Many parents stated that their children would go, but they themselves would tell them to wait for the rain to end, since they had no umbrellas. There was no significant difference in answers according to the locality of the parents or children.

To the question "Do you fear your parents?", 89% of the children answered "yes". Bira give the word "fear" (Swahili, "kuogopa") both the connotations of fear and respect, as revealed by the answers to open-ended questions (see below). When writing the question "Do the parents fear their children as well?" I expected a negative answer but to my surprise, the majority (64%) of children and even a larger proportion (91%) of parents answered "yes". In children's answers, there was a slight tendency for more of the rural (71%, 67%, 72%) and Nyankunde (78%) children to claim that parents feared their children than the children of either of the urban localities (54%, 36%, Table 16). Girls answered this way a little more often (71%) than boys (59%) Table 17), and slightly more Protestant children (84%) expected fear from their parents than Catholic children (61%) (Table 18).

The open-ended question which gave more insight into that issue, was "Why would parents fear their children?" Parents' "fear" was explained as "respect". This idea was expressed in 32% of the

Table 16. Parents' Fear Towards Their Children Compared to the Locality of the Children who Answered the Questionnaire.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulanzabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| no fear | 13<br>29% | 11<br>33% | 11<br>28% | 13<br>22% | 56<br>46% | 9<br>64% |
| yes fear | 32<br>71% | 22<br>67% | 28<br>72% | 46<br>78% | 65<br>54% | 5<br>36% |

(Cramer's V 0.24)

Table 17. Parents' Fear Towards their Children and the Sex of Children who Answered the Question.

| | female | male |
|---|---|---|
| no fear | 33<br>29% | 80<br>41% |
| yes fear | 82<br>71% | 116<br>59% |

(Cramer's V 0.12)

Table 18. Religion and Parental Fear of Children as Seen by Children.

| | Catholic | Protestant |
|---|---|---|
| no fear | 105<br>39% | 5<br>16% |
| yes fear | 167<br>61% | 26<br>84% |

(Cramer's V 0.14)

children's answers and in 40% of parents' answers. Many children wrote interchangeably about mutual respect or mutual fear in the parent-child relationship. Fourteen percent of the children's answers and 42% of parents' answers stated that parents feared their children to an extent that they would not show a bad example to them with their behavior. Several children pointed out that parents' fear stemmed from the knowledge that in time the children would grow to be adults and would have a full understanding. The children would take care of their parents when the latter became old and even visit their graves after they died. With this in mind, the parents respect their offspring. Many other children could not explain why parents feared children except by referring to the fact that parents gave birth to their children and took care of them, and therefore they had to fear children. This shows the Bira world-view, where the parent-child relationship is based on the cycle of creation and sustaining. As many as 99.7% of the school children said that they will agree to take care of their parents when the latter become old and weak. In a country where the government has no social security system, the best security still is one's family, and the children are aware of it.

These explanations reveal a system of reciprocity between parents and children: the parents will reap what they have sown; fear for fear, respect for respect, and care of children in childhood for care of themselves in their old age. This appears to be deeply imbedded in Bira thought, and likely very traditional. If so, the percentages of different answers (Tables 16 to 18) show that rural children are a little more traditional than urban, girls more traditional than boys, and Protestants children more traditional than Catholic children. The first observation supports my thesis that urban communities are less traditional than rural, and the second one that females are more traditional than males. The third observation is one of those rare cases where religious affiliation seems to have some influence on the answers.

In the same vein, to the question "When parents make a mistake, may you scold them?", 65% of the children's answers were positive and 87% of the parents said that a child was allowed to scold a parent who had made a mistake. Some of the parents added that the one to scold must be an older child who has some 'understanding' (Swahili, "akili"); the others emphasized that the scolding should be done with a respectful attitude. The children's open-ended questions and the parental interview showed that the children had a right to expect responsibility and a good example from their parents. If it was not forthcoming, they had the right to remind their parents of it, but in a polite manner. However, answering back to parents or striking them when being disciplined was not allowed, according to 99% of the children and the parents.

Two open-ended questions produced very similar answers, namely "Why would the children need to obey their parents?" and "Why would the children fear their parents?" I will quote some answers verbatim to give a sense of the children's thinking:

"They gave birth to us, and they remove us from danger" (A boy, 11 yrs old, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

"They gave me life, they are our God on earth." (A girl, 16 yrs old, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

"Parents take God's place to take care of children here on earth." (A boy, 14 yrs old, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

"Your parents gave birth to you. One must obey our parents every time, every day, all the time." (A girl, 16 yrs old, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

"If there were not them (parents), where would you come from? Who would give birth to you?" (A girl, 13 yrs old, Nyankunde, Catholic)

These quotations are among many answers which show that Bira children do not take their life for granted but acknowledge their gratitude for their existence to their parents, and ultimately to the Supreme Being, God, who is the originator of all life on earth. This is a traditional world view among the Bira, and it has been readily accepted from the Christian teaching as well.

To continue to quote children's answers to the questions about why to obey or fear parents, there is a group of answers which refer to the caring work of the parents for their children.

"They give me food, clothes, shoes and they put me to school and wash my clothes." (A boy, 11 yrs old, Muzi-Pela,Catholic)

"You live in their house." (A boy, 13 yrs old, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

"They take care of us, so we get wisdom." (A boy, 13 yrs old, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

"He is troubled with a child to bring him up to be a whole person." (A girl, 13 yrs old, Gerechabo, Protestant)

"He has born me, he has raised and cared for me, fed me very well and blessed me very well, and put me to school and paid the school from the first to the sixth grade" (A boy, 13 yrs old, on 6th grade, Gangu, Catholic)

"They created us and pay our school" (A boy, 15 yrs old, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

"He clothes me, he takes care of me and pays my school and excercise books, pens and so on." (A boy, 14 yrs old, Gangu, Catholic)

"He will pay bridewealth for your bride and also he takes care of you from the time you are small until you are big." (A boy, 11 yrs old, Gangu, Catholic)

These answers show that children do not take it for granted that the parents care for their physical needs and education. They recognize that it is a hard job, and they are grateful for their upbringing to their parents. They value every item of clothing and school equipment they receive. It is noteworthy that one of the answers referred to the father's responsibility of paying bridewealth to obtain a wife for his son, which is the traditional duty of a father.

When the question "How do you show respect to your parents?" was formulated, more answers, such as lowering one's eyes, being quiet near adults and kneeling down in front of them, were expected. But these answers were in the minority, only 4% addressed to such formality alone. There was a direct question about lowering of eyes which will be discussed later. But 79% of the answers claimed that their respect to their parents is shown by running errands and working for the parents. Again, some quotations:

"When they send you on an errand, you go with joy and you go very fast." (A boy, 17 yrs old, grade 6, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

"When they send you, you agree to go so that the bitterness of their mind disappears and they rejoice in you." (A girl, 10 yrs old, grade 5, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

"When they send you, you go without refusing, without refusing refusing, without answering anything, and you go without crying crying." (A girl, 11 yrs old, grade 5, Nyankunde, Protestant)

"When they send me, even if it is far, I can go." (A boy, 14 yrs old, grade 6, Baywana, Catholic)

"When they send you, do not refuse nor grumble." (A boy, 14 yrs old, grade 5, Baywana, Muslim)

"When they send you, you go very fast fast, and with only joy and you return with joy." (A boy, 11 yrs old, grade 5, Ngbulanzabo, Protestant)

"When they send you and ask you to go to the place they send you to, go with joy without getting angry, and you should go laughing laughing." (A boy, 15 yrs old, grade 5, Gangu, Catholic)

"If he sends you, you cannot refuse. It is to show love." (A boy, 12 yrs old, grade 5, Gangu, Catholic)

"You help them with work and when they call you you answer quickly. You pound flour and haul water." (A boy, 12 yrs old, grade 5, Goma, Catholic)

"I would do the work they tell me to do, carry a baby, etc." (A boy, 13 yrs old, grade 8, Goma Catholic)

"I help them to hoe fields. If they send you, you will go and get water, you must go if they send you to the market, you will go if they ask you to cut fire wood, you will go." (A boy, 14 yrs old, grade 5, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

"I show respect to my parents if I help them to haul water, wash dishes, haul water, wash dishes." (A girl, 16 yrs old, grade 6, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

The answers show that it is important to obey parents when they send you on errands, and not only obey, but obey with a glad heart, willingly, emphasized by repetition of words. Not only running errands, but working for parents by helping with chores, baby sitting, cooking, hoeing in the fields, taking care of animals, etc., included a sizable portion of answers to how children show respect to their parents.

When the children were asked what chores they did regularly to help parents, it was noted that there was quite a strong association (Cramer's V 0.46) between the number of chores and the sex of the respondent. The girls did more chores than the boys (Table 19). This fits together with the observation in the beginning of the parents' interview. I recorded what each child of the family was doing. Of the children over 10 years old, 47 girls were working, while only 26 boys were working. With smaller children, the numbers were more equal: five smaller girls and six smaller boys were working. Parents were asked what chores each of their children did. When their answers were tabulated, and boys and girls compared, the results were similar to the former observation: Girls were reported as doing the average of

Table 19. The Number of Chores that the Children Reported Doing Regularly in Relation to the Sex of the Child.

| | female | male |
|---|---|---|
| no chores | - | 14<br>7% |
| one chore | 3<br>3% | 46<br>24% |
| two chores | 26<br>23% | 65<br>33% |
| three chores | 28<br>25% | 42<br>22% |
| four chores | 23<br>20% | 11<br>6% |
| five chores | 13<br>12% | 7<br>4% |
| six chores | 7<br>6% | 1<br>- |
| seven chores | 2<br>2% | 1<br>- |
| all chores | 10<br>9% | 7<br>4% |

(Cramer's V 0.46)

7.2 chores while boys 2.2 chores. There was no difference in the number of chores according to the locality, which meant that urban and rural children helped their parents with similar amounts of chores. There was a difference in type of chores, however, which is expected, in that more rural children were reported working in the fields and with animals. More rural girls in the three villages (80%, 82%, 80%) participated in gardening than girls at Nyankunde (70%), at Muzi Pela (43%), or Goma (0%) (Cramer's V 0.52, Table 20). More boys in the three villages (79%, 87%, 80%) and at Nyankunde (86%) did gardening than boys at Muzi-Pela (60%) or Goma (0%) (Cramer's V 0.55, Table 21). Boys engaged in animal care more than girls. Only three girls were reported caring for animals in the entire sample of families. Animal care consisted of tying goats and pigs into poles, and cutting leaves for the pigs, while the goats took care of themselves. None of the Bira children were engaged in cow herding during the school year. More rural boys (86%, 87%, 50%) participated in animal care than boys at Nyankunde (45%), Muzi-Pela (16%), or Goma (0%) (Cramer's V 0.62, Table 22). These three tables show that children in Goma don't practice the traditional subsistence activities of the Bira, and that the children of Muzi-Pela do them less than the children in the rest of the communities. Nyankunde is between the rural and urban orientation.

In 1979, observations were made of the time spent in different tasks at the homes of 20 families in Goma and at Ngbulanzabo. Because some fields were far from the homes, it was possible to observe work done in the fields by boys and girls in only five families. The time spent in wage work by urban men is not included in the table because

Table 20. Horticultural Garden Work Done by Girls in Relation to Locality of the Reporting Parent.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulanzabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| not done | 3<br>20% | 2<br>18% | 2<br>20% | 6<br>30% | 8<br>57% | 8<br>100% |
| done | 12<br>80% | 9<br>82% | 8<br>80% | 14<br>70% | 6<br>43% | - |

(Cramer's V 0.52)

Table 21. Horticultural Garden Work Done by Boys in Relation to the Locality of the Reporting Parent.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulanzabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| not done | 3<br>21% | 2<br>13% | 2<br>20% | 3<br>14% | 10<br>40% | 10<br>100% |
| done | 11<br>79% | 13<br>87% | 8<br>80% | 19<br>86% | 15<br>60% | - |

(Cramer's V 0.55)

Table 22. The Relationship Between Animal Care by Boys and the Locality of the Reporting Parent.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulanzabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| not done | 2<br>14% | 2<br>13% | 5<br>50% | 12<br>54% | 21<br>84% | 10<br>100% |
| done | 12<br>86% | 13<br>87% | 5<br>50% | 10<br>45% | 4<br>16% | - |

(Cramer's V 0.62)

of irregular schedules. Table 23 shows the proportion of time of the day spent at any kind of work by gender, age, and locality as observed at home. It shows that females work longer than males (except between urban men and women if wage work time is considered) and that rural people work longer than urban people (Warkentin 1980:81). In 1979, adults were timed when working in their fields. In the average, men worked about an equal time a day (4 hours and 18 minutes) in the fields as women (4 hours and 12 minutes) (Ibid.:37). This equal attitude towards gardening was reflected in that both boys and girls were reported as working in the fields, a slightly larger proportion of boys (69%) than girls (63%).

In sum, boys and girls were expected to participate in garden work about equally. Animal care was almost exclusively regarded as boy's work. However, girls were assigned a larger number of household chores than boys.

The work aspect came forth as the largest category of response when the parents were asked what benefit they received from children: 59% of the parents mentioned the fact that the children worked or ran errands for them; 33% of the parents mentioned the fact that they would be helped by their children when they got old. Ten percent mentioned that the children continued their family line. Only 8% mentioned the joy which the children would bring to their parents.

Questions were asked about the supervision of children. In the beginning of each parental interview, parents were asked where the children were at that time. Parents knew where small (under seven years old) children were equally for boys and girls: there were only a

Table 23. The Proportion of the Day Used for Work by Male and Female Bira, Both Children and Adults in 1979 in Goma and at Ngbulanzabo (Warkentin 1980: 81).

| | Females | | Males | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ages | Goma | Ngbulanzabo | Goma | Ngbulanzabo |
| Children: | | | | |
| 3-6 | 10% | 12% | 5% | 3% |
| 7-10 | 29% | 33% | 15% | 12% |
| 11-13 | 49% | 53% | 11% | 9% |
| 14- | 41% | 61% | 29% | 21% |
| Adults: | 67% | 84% | 38% * | 53% |

* Observations were made at Bira homes. Therefore wage work not included for those who worked elsewhere.

couple of parents who did not know where their small child was at that time. However, for older (over seven years old) children, there was a difference between sexes: Girls' places were consistently better known (two girls, 3%, not known, 68 girls known) than boys' places (22 boys, 23%, not known, 75 known). When parents were asked if their children needed permission to go to the market by themselves, 16% of parents stated that girls needed it but boys did not; the majority (75%) of parents believed permission was necessary. When parents were asked about general moving around, 38% of them stated that boys did not need permission but girls did. Often parents said that they needed to know where the girls were because the latter had to help with chores (more than boys did). It would be very bad if a girl disappeared and was nowhere to be found when the time came to do chores.

The schoolchildren were asked if their parents knew where they were all the time. The answers were divided in half: 48% of the children said their parents knew where they were; the others said the parents did not know. More girls (68%) stated that their parents were aware of their whereabouts than boys (36%) (Cramer's V 0.31, Table 24). Also there was a trend (Cramer's V 0.37) for less rural children (Sezabo 43%, Ngbulanzabo 30%, and Gerechabo 8%) to state that their parents knew their location than the children at Nyankunde (65%), Muzi-Pela (57%) and Goma (64%) (Table 25). When thinking of the possible reason behind this, one can note that life was more easy-going in the villages. Everyone knew the children; the children knew fellow villagers and the terrain around them. Therefore, parents did not need to keep an eye on them. In the city, there are many

Table 24. Children's Thoughts about Parents' Knowing where They are. The Relationship of their Answers to the Sex of the Student.

| | female | male |
|---|---|---|
| not know | 36<br>32% | 123<br>64% |
| know | 77<br>68% | 70<br>36% |

(Cramer's V 0.31)

Table 25. The Locality of the Students in Relation to their Answers Concerning Parents Knowing where They are.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulan-zabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| not know | 25<br>57% | 23<br>70% | 35<br>92% | 20<br>35% | 51<br>42% | 5<br>36% |
| know | 19<br>43% | 10<br>30% | 3<br>8% | 37<br>65 | 69<br>57% | 9<br>64% |

(Cramer's V 0.37)

strange and potentially hostile people and many temptations in shops and bars. Parents must have felt a need to guard their children more closely. When the children were asked if they needed to ask for their parents' permission to go to the market, 85% answered in the affirmative. In this question, there was no association with the location nor with the children's sex, although parents had emphasized the greater need for permission for girls.

Although few children referred to lowering of eyes when talking to parents in open-ended questions, the majority of the children (83%) and parents (69%) answered "no" to the question, "May you (a child) look at your parents' eyes when you talk to them?" Adults said that it was not polite for a child to look at parents' eyes but he should lower them to show respect to authority. There was no association with the locality of parents or children. The old form of respect was intact in every location reagrdless of its position on the folk-urban continuum. Another formality in the parent-child relationship was curstying in front of parents by children when handing something to the former. It was observed that in the villages, the children curtsied far down to the ground while at Nyankunde and Muzi-Pela the curtsying was not as deep, and finally in Goma, curtsying was not seen at all. When discussing manners of politeness with parents they expressed their wishes for formalities in every locality, however less so in Goma. This shows that Goma is breaking away from some old ways of showing respect to parents.

In sum, the discussion of obedience and reciprocity in parent-child relationships has shown that the children and parents value these aspects universally regardless of the degree of urbanization of their location. There are only a few details which show some differences depending on the location. Differences according to the religious affiliation of the children are rare. Finally, Bira train males and females differently in work roles.

## Bira Discipline

Sakana had been a boogeyman in the past. As narrated above, his discipline had been severe and efficient. Modern Bira commented that Sakana was a lie but it had been effective. Parents and lineage members had been additional disciplinary agents. Children and parents were asked about the discipline used today.

The children were asked to write an example of being punished "severely", "makali", in their childhood, something that they still remembered. Twelve percent said they had never been punished; 5% did not answer this question. I think that in reality all the children had been punished, but they did not bother to write about it or they had forgotten. The majority, 83% of the children, claimed that they had been punished. A similar proportion of the girls wrote an example as boys, although when parents were asked to tell an example of punishment in the family, parents narrated more examples involving boys (45) than girls (23). The children's descriptions were more concrete and detailed than that of the parents. Some examples:

"They beat me until my hand swoll up. I refused to tie goats, (when) 11 years old." (A boy, 12 yrs old, grade 5, Muzi-Pela.)

"I hit my younger (sibling). They beat me until I had a big wound." (A girl, 14 yrs old, grade 6, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

"I went to the river. I had a pot on my head. It fell and broke a little but my 'little mother' (mother's co-wife?) beat me until my whole body hurt. I was in grade 3 then (c.10 yrs old). (A girl, 12 yrs old, grade 5, Muzi-Pela, Catholic.)

"I hit a child with an iron. They whipped me. I was 9 yrs old." (A boy, 13 yrs old, grade 6, Muzi-Pela, Catholic.)

"When I was 9, they steal badly. We went to eat mangos of the Catholic fathers. They (not clear whom "they" refer to) whipped us 25 lashes." (A boy, 13 yrs old, grade 8, Muzi-Pela, Catholic.)

"I hit another child's eye so that it swoll. They wanted to burn my hand. I was 6 yrs old." (A boy, 11 yrs, grade 6, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

Of all punishments reported, beating, slapping or whipping was the most common, 64% of answers, either alone or in combination with other forms of punishment. Parents were asked what punishments they gave to their children, and 87% of them mentioned beating. Withholding food from a child for some time was reported by 18% of children who had been punished, either alone or in combination with other forms of punishment. 71% of the parents mentioned administering this punishment. When the only regular meal, the evening meal, was denied to the guilty child, he understood the message quickly. Tying hands or feet, chasing from home, making a child do extra work, making him stand on his head with his feet up against the wall, making a child carry stones on the head, burning the hands, or pouring water or gasoline over a person were mentioned as punishments by children. The children produced more variety in their lists of punishments, and they mentioned more torturing punishments than parents. Some parents apparently forgot having punished their children. Once I saw a father beat his daughter. However, when I asked him the next day to tell me an example how he had recently punished, he did not remember having done so. A mother noted that they did not hold punishments in their memory, they just slapped here and there and forgot it right away. Eighty-nine percent of the children, regardless of the locality, admitted being afraid of their parents' punishment.

Children were asked to give the age at which they were punished severely (as a continuation of the previous question). The associations show that larger numbers of girls were generally punished younger than boys (Table 26) and a larger number of Catholic children were punished at older ages than Protestant children (Table 27). It appears that because girls were kept under continuous surveillance, they learned their lessons on discipline earlier than boys, who were allowed to roam around more freely. I cannot explain why there was the difference between Catholic and Protestant children.

Many (107) children omitted to mention why they had been punished. The largest group of reasons mentioned for punishment by the rest of the children (38%) was disobedience or disrespect toward parents. Parents (90%) regarded these two reasons as the most important. Fighting among children was the reason for punishment in 22% of the cases as seen by children and 47% as seen by the parents. Other reasons, less common, were stealing, breaking something, missing school, coming home late at night, returning slowly from an errand, or

Table 26. The Relationship of the Age of being Punished to the Sex of the Students.

| | female | male |
|---|---|---|
| no punishment received | 13<br>12% | 23<br>12% |
| 3-7 years | 22<br>20% | 15<br>8% |
| 8 years | 18<br>16% | 21<br>11% |
| 9 years | 12<br>11% | 23<br>12% |
| 10 years | 21<br>19% | 38<br>20% |
| 11 years | 5<br>5% | 14<br>8% |
| 12-16 years | 18<br>17% | 52<br>28% |

(Cramer's V 0.22)

Table 27. Age when Punished in Relation to Religion.

| | Catholic | Protestant |
|---|---|---|
| no punishment received | 35<br>13% | - |
| 3-7 years | 29<br>11% | 8<br>27% |
| 8 years | 28<br>11% | 10<br>33% |
| 9 years | 30<br>12% | 4<br>13% |
| 10 years | 55<br>21% | 3<br>10% |
| 11 years | 18<br>7% | 1<br>3% |
| 12-16 years | 64<br>25% | 4<br>13% |

(Cramer's V 0.28)

going out without permission. Parents were asked if their children stole from them; 53% acknowledged some trouble or could not say that they did not, with no clear difference between localities. In three communities, Nyankunde, Muzi-Pela, and Goma, there were a couple of Bira adolescents or young men who were said to be thieves. They brought shame to their parents. All of these men had been to prison. In Goma, a Bira man had spent years in prison, ever since his adolescence. When he was let go from prison, he was said to continue stealing, and he was put back in prison. His parents were helpless in the situation. In the villages, such cases did not exist.

Children seemed to have an understanding of why parents punished them, as shown by some answers to a general question about parental punishments.

"Parents scold children for small mistakes. For big mistakes, parents beat you so that you might leave the bad habit behind and not continue in it." (A boy, 16 yrs old, grade 6, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

"If you have committed a big mistake, your parents beat you and scold you for the bad habit. Try to turn from all your deeds, be very good and you will be a good child." (A girl, in secondary school, Muzi-Pela, Catholic)

The children were asked if they could talk back to their parents, laugh at them or strike them when being scolded or punished by parents. Of both children and parents, 99% said "no", 1 % "yes". As an explanation, children wrote that they recognized their mistake and therefore must be quiet, or that parents as creators and caretakers of the children had the right to punish them. It is as simple as that in children's and parents' thoughts. One child answered, "A parent is not a child like you. He suffered much to bring you up. You must respect them even if you are stronger than your parents" (A boy, 14 yrs old, grade 6, Baywana, Muslim).

Parents had power over their children also with the threat of a curse they could lay over them. An especially efficient curse was when a mother touched her thighs when cursing. Thighs were considered sacred and they conferred blessing; a curse would come from there. When a mother held a child on her lap, it was a blessing; when she touched her thighs with her hands, it was a curse against a child. Parents could also choose to curse casually by mouth without touching the thighs. The children and parents were asked if they believed that parents' curses would become true. 77% of the children and 92% of the parents said "yes", with no special association to any locality. When asked how to remove a curse, 96% of the children and 85% of the parents answered by suggesting respectful, humble behavior, trying to soften the parents' angry heart. Among these, a large group of children referred to one or more aspects of a traditional ritual which was used for cancelling parents' anger toward their children. This ritual involved lineage elders, sacrifice of a chicken for the ancestors, throwing of water and using saliva as a symbol for restoration of broken relationship. (7% did not answer this question, 1% said there was nothing to be done to reverse a curse, and 3% expressed rebellion by moving away from cursing parents.) The answers show that the vast majority of children respect their parents and accept their submissive place in the family.

Bira elders acknowledged that moral order has broken down with modern times. In the old days, people were afraid of ancestors' wrath, and this fear kept them in line. Elders also claimed that modern children were not as respectful toward them as children in the past. A man commented that children now lacked fear toward their parents. However, children's behavior was still monitored by adults, who made children, especially girls, work hard at every day chores and running errands. Recalcitrant children were punished severely, as described above. Therefore, children's relationship to parents was kept in order, although the adults' relationships to each other had lost much of their traditional social controls.

Changes in the composition of the community have made the present socialization environment different from that of the clan villages. Traditional villages were composed of members of one clan with three to four related lineage segments, and each lineage controlled its own children. Every child was known by every adult. The situation is different today. Villages have retained their lineage structures, but even they have been infiltrated by outsiders, such as church personnel, school teachers, or people looking for escape from witchcraft in their own clan soil. But mission stations and urban centres are totally composed of people from different clans, tribes and nationalities. There is no indigenous structure to them. In principle, everyone holds that children should respect every adult as they do their parents; 98% of the school children and 99% of parents so agreed. Also, 95% of the school children claimed that they would go on an errand if sent by an adult whom they did not know. Less parents agreed; 61% of them said that their child should go on an errand if an unknown person sent him. The rest of the parents either said "no" or added conditions. They explained (in urban and rural areas alike) that one could never know if an unknown adult came there to steal; therefore, they had advised their children not to leave the house even though an adult told them to do so.

When parents were asked if a neighbor was allowed to punish their children, 71% answered in the positive. There was no numerical difference in the distribution of answers according to the locality or religion. Bira children came into contact with a new adult outside their lineage, namely the teacher. Ninety-eight percent of the school children said that they feared and respected their teacher, and 88% of them claimed to fear his punishment. When asked how the teacher punished, the answers of the children noted similar punishments to those of their parents, with the exception that the teacher sometimes demanded a certain number of reeds to be brought to school as a punishment, and work punishment was more frequent than parents demanded.

In spite of an ideal respect for unknown adults, it was observed that children could behave disrespectfully towards strangers. They would interrupt two adults chatting in an urban street, and start imitating them in a mocking fashion, which they would never do to their parents or familiar adults. Although the teachers' role was commonly seen as an expansion of the parental role, it was observed once that this position was debatable. A female teacher was shoving a boy, about ten years of age, to the principal's office. She explained to the principal that she had scolded the boy, and he had answered back to her saying that she was not his mother. The teacher had punched him in the nose.

During the 1980's, digging gold has become a popular occupation for young strong men in the Bira area, as in other parts of Zaire. Adolescents skip school, and young men quit regular employment to pursue the gold trade. Also, some parents complained that boys spent their time in gold digging rather than in doing chores at home. Boys showed proudly clothes that they had been able to buy with their gold sales. When young men returned from a day's work after selling their gold they spent a portion of their money for liquor. A new problem of increased use of alcohol has arisen in parent-child relationship. This contradicted the respect a child was to show towards his parents. Drunkenness has increased. A school director, when commenting on alcohol use, pointed out that it was a boost to the economy because more ladies everywhere distilled more alcoholic beverages than ever before. When I was sleeping in different localities in the Bira area, villages and urban centres alike, much drunken noise was heard all night long.

Traditionally, alcoholic drinks were served at festivals only. Now they could be bought any day anywhere. Once a youngster threatened to hit his mother with his belt. Onlookers commented that a son should not hit his mother, but that it happened if he was drunk. People remembered a case in recent years at Muzi-Pela when a drunken son beat his father to death.

When adults are intoxicated, they behave irresponsibly in front of their children. Seventy-four percent of the school children said that they needed to show respect to parents who were drunk; 56% of the parents propounded the same idea. However, it was observed in one of the villages that a teen age son was so embarrassed at his mother's drunken behavior in a village street that he walked her into their house and beat her so she would stay in. Onlookers approved of his behavior. Thus alcohol can reverse the roles of the parents and children, which is very much against tradition.

Through children's answers, we have seen that they still uphold traditional values in regard to their parents. They respect parents for giving them life and livelihood. They say that they are glad to do their daily chores and run errands for their parents in exchange for the gifts of life and livelihood. They accept the parents' discipline over them without rebelling. They keep the formality in expressing their respect toward their parents and extend this relationship ideally to other adults.

Differences in the answers between Catholics and Protestants are minimal. More (84%) Protestant children claimed that parents should fear their children than Catholic (61%) children. The second numerical difference between the two groups concerns the age of punishment: more Catholic children report being punished at an older age than Protestant children. One possible interpretation is that Protestant children learn obedience from their early punishments, while Catholic children need to be reminded longer. It appears that, in general, however, the religious affiliation has hardly any bearing on parent-child relationship.

Traditionally, there were sex differences in childrearing, and the answers show that the Bira have retained them. The girls are expected to stay in parents' sight more (68%) than boys (36%), because they are expected to do more chores than the latter. It may also be that their morality is guarded this way. Animal care was almost entirely a male job. Household chores belonged to females, but sometimes boys could help, although with some reluctance. A larger number of boys reported being punished at later ages than girls. Fewer boys (59%) expected parents to fear their children than girls (71%) did.

In most answers, the rural and urban communities agreed at least what the relationship between parents and children ought to be. Only a couple of differences according to the locality emerged in children's answers. Fewer children in urban (Goma and Muzi-Pela) communities expected their parents to fear children than in the rest of the communities. Also, more urban (Goma and Muzi-Pela) and Nyankunde children claimed that their parents knew where they are than rural (Sezabo, Ngbulanzabo, and Gerechabo) children. The parents kept better track of their children in hostile urban environments than in villages where everyone knew each other.

Although the ideal of obedience was expressed in the answers, deviations from rules were observed. Sometimes, although rarely, children disobeyed their parents. Everywhere the use of alcohol might temporarily change the traditional parent-child relationship. Although there were parents in every locality who reported petty thievery by their children, there were cases in the three largest and the most acculturated localities (Nyankunde, Muzi-Pela, and Goma) where some young Bira men were said to be chronic thieves and had spent time in prison. In the following discussion of marital arrangements, the differences in parent-child relationships between rural and urban communities will be seen to become even more significant.

# CHAPTER EIGHT: GETTING MARRIED

The complex procedure of getting married has changed in the past and is presently going through more drastic changes than ever before, because modern constraints, especially in urban areas, prevent the following of the ideal customs. In the previous chapter, it was suggested that the traditional sentiments in the parent-child relationship have not basically changed. This chapter will show that the changes are greater for juvenile Bira than for younger children. First, the traditional marital arrangements will be described, and then the present situation will be outlined. The data for this chapter have come from informant interviews and questionnaires to children (about future plans), interviews with their parents, and primarily from shorter interviews with parents about their own and their children's marriage arrangements. Observations in each locality have given depth to the issues learned from interviews. An old ethnography (Constance-Marie 1947) and several studies on the subject about other African societies have provided a comparative framework for the present findings among the Bira.

The Bira marriage rule is clan exogamy. One clan would inhabit a string of villages among whom marriages were forbidden. Because of patrilineality and the patrilocal residence rule, boys would stay in their home village throughout their lives, and girls would change their residence at the time of marriage. In the early part of the nineteenth century, people were not able to travel safely outside their clan area due to inter-clan feuding. Even when the feuds ended in the latter part of that century, there was not much reason for people to visit areas outside their own clan area. Therefore, people tended to stay in their home villages. Furthermore, segregation of sexes has always been customary among the Bira. At feasts, such as weddings, funerals, naming ceremonies or any gatherings, even when dancing, men and women have been segregated. The segregation used to reach to the domestic area; at home, a wife's living area was separate from that of the husband. They ate their meals separately and came together only for sexual purposes. Although men and women can now get together more freely than in the past, this still carries a strong sexual connotation, stronger than westerners have been able to understand.

Due to the rule of clan exogamy, the patterning of clan villages and lack of a need to travel to different areas, boys did not meet girls they could marry. The parents of young people did not want them to. Instead, the marriages were arranged by the families of the young people. As children could not marry into the villages which their mother, grandmothers and great grandmothers were from, it was essential that older members of the families concerned carefully investigate each possibility for marriage. When a father decided that it was time for his son to marry, when the latter was about 15 years old, he would send a word to his sister, who by then was married somewhere else, to look for a suitable wife for his son. The sister would know the girls, about 13 years old, in her marital village and their families. She would choose a girl whose family had a good reputation, who herself would be a good worker and a person who would show respect to her elders. The father's cister would then work as a go-between in the marriage negotiations.

When a marriage had been agreed upon at the parental level, a formal occasion, called "lingana" ('to look at each other') was arranged, where the bride and the groom formally inspected each other in the presence of their childhood friends, and they had a nominal right to accept or refuse the partner. Constance-Marie (1947:91) remarked that this custom was of a relatively recent introduction in the 1940's, forty years ago. She described the rough treatment of a child if he refused to marry the father's choice before this new and more lenient custom of "lingana". My informants confirmed that "lingana" was not a very old custom, but I failed to ask questions about why and how it was introduced. It may have been introduced by missionaries.

After gaining the consent of the bride and the groom, the father of the groom worked at getting the bridewealth payment ready. Bride wealth has been two to three goats and two to four cows during this century; presently it is three goats and three cows. The father's brothers tried to help him, if he had not enough animals. The southern Bira say that formerly all the bridewealth had to be paid before the bride entered the groom's house. Among the northern Bira, it was customary that goats had to be paid before the bride entered the groom's house for trial marriage. If she was accepted by her parents-in-law, the rest of the payments had to be made. It was a universal custom among the Bira that one of the goats was eaten by the bride's family. This was the blessing of her family over the marriage.

At the wedding feast, called "bangabonge", the bride was accompanied by girls and women of her village to the house of the groom's parents. In songs and dances, the brides's side mocked the groom's family and vice versa most of the night. I regard this as acting out former clan hostilities of the feuding period when wives were married from enemy clans. At sunrise, mocking was stopped and special reverence was shown to the ancestors of the groom's lineage. The bride crawled on her knees to the lineage elders of the groom who then marked her forehead with their saliva. This was thought as a blessing on the marriage, although it became a curse if the bride later decided to leave her husband.

After the wedding, the bride had to work for her parents-in-law for a few months to prove that she was worth the bridewealth and to show that she was able to do the work which was expected of every married woman. It was her mother-in-law's decision when she had worked enough. Then the former would give household items to the daughter-in-law, and she was allowed to start cooking for her husband in their own house (which he had built before the marriage).

Traditionally, getting married among the Bira was a contract of two groups of people, not merely between the individual groom and his bride. The parents of the young people were the main forces in the operation. The transfer of the bridewealth from the groom's lineage to the bride's lineage served as security for good treatment of the wife; as a form of compensation to the wife's lineage for the loss of a member; as the transference of genitorial rights over children; as a symbol of the union of two lineages; as a mechanism to legally validate a customary marriage; and as the transference of uxorial rights over women (Ferraro 1976, 1983). Of the bridewealth, the cows specifically were regarded as payments for the children whom the wife was to bear. The bride represented her lineage and family, and she was expected to bring honor to these by her respectful and diligent behavior in her new home. The young couple was watched over by the lineage ancestors so they would behave morally and produce many offspring to ensure the continuity of the lineage of the groom. When paying the bridewealth, the parents of the groom had the right to intervene in the couples' possible disputes and receive continual services from their son and his wife. The mother-in-law was responsible for the well being of the bride and the former lost face if the bride was not treated humanely. The bride had "sisters" and "father's sisters" from her home village who were married in her new village. They monitored the situation. On the other hand, when receiving the bridewealth, the bride's family was responsible to either help her to continue in this marriage or return the bridewealth. As it was important to keep the wealth, which was often used as bridewealth payment for the marriage of the bride's brother, the bride's family would put pressure on the girl to behave well in her marital status and thus ensure the stability of the marriage. It has been debated in the literature, whether bridewealth contributes to the stability of the marriage (eg. Gray 1960, Ferraro 1983). Among the Bira, it has certainly done so.

Today getting married is a mixed-up situation. In general, the villages have preserved old traditions better than the mission stations and urban centres, but even they have not stayed intact in the process of change. In the following sections, these points of change in all communities will be discussed: the choice of the spouse, bridewealth payments, the bride's service for her parents-in-law, and, finally, the central role of the ancestors.

To understand the trend of change in marital arrangements, 594 unions of 379 individuals were recorded. Out of these unions, 375 (63%) were first marriages, 150 (25%) second marriages, 42 (7%) third marriages, and the rest 27 (4%) were from the fourth to the ninth marriages (either concurrent or sequential marriages). The first marriages were, of course, more important in the study of parent-child relationships than later marriages because the offspring were considered children at that time and were more dependent on their parents than when arranging their consequent unions. In this study, then, only first marriages were used in the numerical analysis. Of all unions, 47 (8%) were interviewed in Goma, 126 (21%) at Muzi-Pela, 121 (20%) at Nyankunde, 110 (18%) at Gerechabo, 97 (16%) at Ngbulanzabo, and 93 (16%) at Sezabo. Sometimes the people interviewed had lived elsewhere than these six localities at the time of the wedding. The other locations were matched with the six categories from the most urban to the most rural: big city (Goma), small city (Bunia or Muzi-Pela), town (Nyankunde), mixed village (Gerechabo), village (Ngbulanzabo), traditional village (Sezabo).

The majority (409, 69%) of the interviewed people in all marriages involved Catholics, 179 (30%) Protestants, and 6 (1%) other or no religious affiliation. When getting married the first time, 211

(56%) young people were in their teens, 144 (38%) in their twenties, 9 (2%) in their thirties, and the age of 11 people (3%) was not known. Of the first unions, 49 (13%) had been entered before the end of the 1940's, 44 (12%) in the 1950's, 53 (14%) in the 1960's, 100 (27%) in the 1970's, and 129 (34%) in the 1980's. In the following, this variation has made it possible to compare marital changes with the age of partners, the date of the wedding, the religious affiliation, and the locality of the marriages.

## Choice of Spouse

When the choice of a spouse was left to adults, it was essential that young people not meet eligible spouses. Traditional villages were organized so this did not happen. Before the colonial rule, there was no need for people to go anywhere, because villages were largely self supporting. There was some trading, e.g., fish from the lake and cattle and milk products of the pastoral Hema to the garden products of the Bira, but actual markets came into being only under the Belgian rule (Bilongani 1981). The colonial government started mines and plantations which needed a labor force. As described in Chapter Three on Bira History, large numbers of people, not only Bira but all surrounding tribes, started moving from their traditional villages to obtain wage labor, which gave rise to tribally mixed population centres. Although villages stayed relatively intact, there was some mixing of tribes and clans when new plantations, as at Gerechabo, were started in the vicinity of a village. Village schools and churches

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were usually staffed by outsiders, as at Ngbulanzabo, Gerechabo, and Sezabo. Furthermore, as mentioned for Ngbulanzabo, a large number of outsiders came to study at the Bible Institute. During recent years, people have been free to move from their clan area for various reasons; simultaneously clan villages have been invaded by outside people.

With these structural changes, young people have opportunities to meet eligible spouses directly. Many people everywhere commented that, since schools arrived in the Bira area, the young people chose their spouses at school. Then relatives were not needed in the choosing process. However, there is still a difference between the localities in the matter of who chooses the spouse. Schoolchildren in different localities were asked,"Do you want your family to find you a spouse or do you want to look for a spouse yourself?". There was an association between the locality and the answer: Urban children (Goma 71%, Muzi-Pela 51%) were more likely to say that they wanted to choose a spouse themselves, while rural children (Sezabo 20%, Ngbulanzabo 6%, Gerechabo 8%) and Nyankunde children (27%) were less likely to rely on themselves in the choice of their spouses (Cramer's V 0.42, Table 28). When parents were asked who would choose the spouse for their children, there was an association between the locality of the parent and the answer. This time the localities were more distinctly divided in two groups: very few rural (none at Sezabo and Gerechabo, 14% at Ngbulanzabo) parents predict that their children will choose their spouses, while the rest of the parents in more urban communities (Nyankunde 30%, Muzi-Pela 29%, and, most prominently, Goma 73%) note

Table 28. The Relationship between Children's Answers and Their Locality Concerning the Question Who Will Find a Spouse for Them.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulan-zabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| "myself" | 9 | 2 | 3 | 15 | 60 | 10 |
| | 20% | 6% | 8% | 27% | 51% | 71% |
| family | 36 | 31 | 36 | 41 | 58 | 4 |
| | 80% | 94% | 92% | 73% | 49% | 29% |

(Cramer's V 0.42)

Table 29. The Relationship between Parents' Answers and Their Locality Concerning the Question Who Will Find the Spouse for Their Children.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulan-zabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| child himself | - | 2 | - | 7 | 7 | 8 |
| | | 14% | | 30% | 29% | 73% |
| family | 15 | 12 | 14 | 16 | 17 | 3 |
| | 100% | 86% | 100% | 70% | 71% | 27% |

(Cramer's V 0.50)

that possibility (Cramer's V 0.50, Table 29). Thirdly, actual marriage arrangements were tabulated, and a similar trend found. Proceeding from the most traditional village to the most urban centre, increasingly more couples (17%, 14%, 31%, 51%, 48%, 59%) found each other without family mediation (Cramer's V 0.35, Table 30). So all three sources, namely the answers of schoolchildren, those of their parents, and the actual marriage arrangements, showed a parallel trend in the process of change.

There was no relationship between who finds the spouse and the sex of the person reporting on the marriage. However, there was some trend for people under 20 (74%) to have someone else find a spouse for them, as compared to persons 20 years or older (51%) and 30 years or older (67%) (Cramer's V 0.22, Table 31). Also, there was some association (Cramer's V 0.32) between the spouse-finder and the year of marriage: Those who were married in the 1940's were more likely (90%) to have someone else find them a spouse than those married in the 1980's (56%) (Table 32). When the kin relations of the spouse-finders to the bridal couple were recorded, there was great variation. However, the traditional spouse-finder, the groom's father's sister, was still most frequent (76 cases), and its younger version, namely the groom's sister, was the second most frequent (59 cases).

To emphasize the contrasting situation in a city and in a village, two examples are given. The first comes from Ngbulanzabo, where a father attempted to find his son a wife. One Sunday he went with his bicycle to a village of another clan to meet with the parents

Table 30. The Relationship between the One Who Found the Spouse and the Locality of the Marriage Arrangements.

| | Trad. village | village | mixed village* | town | small city | big city |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| couple themselves | 8<br>17% | 9<br>14% | 35<br>31% | 17<br>51% | 22<br>48% | 40<br>59% |
| someone else | 39<br>83% | 57<br>86% | 77<br>69% | 16<br>48% | 24<br>52% | 28<br>41% |

(Cramer's V 0.35)

Table 31. The Relationship between the Age of the Person Getting Married and the Person Who Found the Spouse.

| | 10-19 years | 20-29 years | 30 years and up |
|---|---|---|---|
| couple themselves | 56<br>26% | 70<br>49% | 3<br>33% |
| someone else | 155<br>74% | 74<br>51% | 6<br>67% |

(Cramer's V 0.22)

Table 32. The Relationship Between the One Who Found the Spouse and the Year the Marriage was Contracted.

| | 1940's | 1950's | 1960's | 1970's | 1980's |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| couple themselves | 5<br>10% | 7<br>16% | 13<br>24% | 51<br>51% | 57<br>44% |
| someone else | 44<br>90% | 37<br>84% | 40<br>76% | 49<br>49% | 72<br>56% |

(Cramer's V 0.32)

of a prospective bride. He returned in the afternoon, saying that he did not think that the parents understood what the Protestant faith was about, so he decided not to pursue this candidate further. As an elder of the Protestant church, he thought that his son should marry a Protestant. (This decision was quite rare among the Bira, most of whom held that it was more important to marry than to pay attention to the denomination.) His son, 17 years old, was playing in the yard with other children, paying no attention to his father's plan. The father had the cows and goats ready for his son's marriage. Eventually, he found a suitable girl for his son, and the young man married her.

In Goma, a young fellow, Jean, in his 20's, stated that he was thinking of getting married to a girl whom he had met in a night club. He had saved some money, and his relatives in Bunia had promised to give him a cow which he was planning to sell in Bunia. (However, the airline ticket for him to go from Goma to Bunia and do the business, would take most of the money that a cow would produce.) His father was not aware of his son's plans. On the contrary, he believed that his son could not get married because he had no money. His girlfriend's father did not know about the plan either. The only way the young man knew how much to save for bridewealth was that he had once heard the father talk about the bridewealth when the father had been drinking beer in a bar and had become quite intoxicated. "What if the father wanted to add to this request?" I asked. The young man claimed that he did not care. He would pay what he was aiming for. If it was not satisfactory, he would elope with the girl, and there was little that her father could do. He would go and meet the girl every evening at a certain time for five minutes or so. However, eventually he found out that she had other boyfriends and he gave her up, although he still intended to marry someone. There are many points where this urban case is unconventional: first, the fathers of the young couple were ignorant of the arrangements, although they should have been the masters of negotiations according to the tradition; secondly, the young people kept on meeting each other, which is not permitted in the villages; and thirdly, there was no set bridewealth. It seemed that the young man would do this his way no matter what, except that it did not work out. The cow promised from Bunia is a traditional addition in the unconventional affair, although its value would be reduced due to the great distance.

Missions, both Catholic and Protestant, although supporting obedience to parents, convey a conflicting message to the Bira, that it is right for a person to make his/her own choice of a marriage partner. Moreover, young Bira are not prepared to exercise this freedom of choice, because it is not customary to teach principles of choice to the young people at home. The missions do try to teach qualities to look for in choosing a spouse, but Bira attend such lessons the least of all tribes. In fact, Bira mothers were suspicious of the supervised program for young people in the Protestant church, because girls and boys were mixed. To them, mixed groups were immoral as such. In fact, some old people went as far as to say that schools and churches were bad, because the opposite sexes had an opportunity to meet there.

The Bira are among many African groups entering the new and confusing state of the freedom of choice of a spouse (e.g., Jahoda 1973). Little and Price (1973) have pointed out that, in traditional West African marriages, emphasis in marriage was on procreative and economic functions rather than on personal feelings of the spouses for each other. Furthermore, they claim that, in such marriages, the husband and wife were called upon to make relatively few personal adjustments to each other, because life was communal and the spouses' disputes were settled in the lineage. In West Africa, there was a new notion of romantic love emerging due to western movies and Christian teaching (Jahoda 1973), and among the educated, there was an aspiration for companionship in the marital relationship (Little and Price 1973). Although I did not investigate the matter systematically, I noticed that rural Bira do not generally look for romantic love or companionship in man/woman relationships. The segregation of domestic duties is still very strong. Some urban people expressed romantic aspirations. Sexual liaisons have become easy to obtain in urban centres, and the matter of choice of partners is not critical. The Bira said themselves that the man with money pleases any woman, no matter what his personality is like. He can win any woman just by showing money or giving a gift of clothes, and any woman is ready for him, married or single. This counteracts the customary careful screening of spouse candidates by adult relatives.

The choice of a spouse in mixed population centres is not always successful, even when it receives the blessing of the parents. An example is a case in which a Protestant Christian female nurse at the mission hospital married, with her father's approval, a Protestant male nurse, who had moved there from elsewhere in Zaire. As the groom had no family near by, some missionaries helped him to make the bridewealth payments. However, when the groom was later caught stealing hospital medicine and dismissed from his job, it became evident that he was already married in another locality in Zaire. This shows that, at present, the history of individuals is impossible to know, quite a different dilemma from the old situation in clan villages.

Another example reflects the new conditions in a quiet village and the clinging to the old at the same time. There was talk at Ngbulanzabo about a young man, 17 years old, who was in love with a girl who sang in the same church choir as he. The girl was a daughter of a teacher in the new Bible Institute; the boy belonged to one of the original lineages of Ngbulanzabo. One day, I had an opportunity to talk to his older brother who already was married. He told me that his brother had not done anything about the matter but will ask his father in the future to contact her parents and negotiate a marriage agreement for him. Similarly, 20 people of all interviewed claimed that they had found their spouse themselves but asked the family members to arrange the marriage deal for them. Here new and old come together without friction.

To sum up, the customary way of a groom's father and father's sister choosing the spouse, is followed mostly in rural areas, while in urban areas the choice is more likely left to the young people themselves. Those who have left their clan villages seldom have relatives to choose spouses for them. In addition, modern institutions (e.g., churches, schools, jobs) facilitate individual choice. The children are used to strict parental control of their affairs, but in adolescence find a sudden freedom.

## Traditional Meeting, "Lingana".

Ideally, couples were not expected to meet each other until the officially arranged situation, "lingana". Two observations illustrated this ideal. A youngster at Nyankunde beat his sister for having walked down the road with a boy. At Badya, a young female high school student was dismissed from her boarding place at her uncle's, because she had received a letter from a man. Informal contact was not acceptable, only officially arranged "lingana". A boy would go to this special occasion with his peers and a girl with hers. They would face each other standing on a woven mat laid on the floor and inspect each other's physical appearance carefully. The boy was asked by the go-between, often the person who found the girl, if the girl pleased him and the girl was asked if the boy pleased her. The girl would then sit on the boy's lap (a deed done in sacred occasions, see the topic of parental curse in the previous chapter) and he would serve her beer; then the girl would serve him beer to seal up the decision.

A fellow in a village claimed that his friends helped him to inspect the girl very carefully at his first "lingana". Although he himself did not notice, his friends observed that the girl had very lanky legs. He did not marry her because of this deficiency but sent a word to the girl's family that he was not able to have the cows ready.

This was a tactful way of refusing. Several fellows told me that it would be too embarrassing to refuse bluntly during the "lingana" ceremony, so a word sent afterwards would be a good way to do it. Another fellow told me that he refused the first girl he looked at because when leaving the girl's home he saw her climbing a mango tree. He did not like the idea that the girl was behaving like a boy, and he refused to marry her. In another refusal, a man rejected his first bridal candidate because she was so drunk at the "lingana" that she lay on the floor.

I did not hear of any girls having refused a suitor at "lingana". One informant believed that a girl would be too shy to refuse publically, but would walk out of the house. The go-between would follow her, asking if the groom candidate pleased her. It would then be possible for her to refuse. The same informant said that a girl was not expected to stare at the boy too much, but had to lower her eyes, a similar expression of respect to what children had to express toward their parents. It is likely that girls did not refuse. The following example illustrates this. At Gerechabo, I asked my host's daughter if anyone had been around asking for her as a wife. She did not answer (as girls were supposed to be shy about the matter), but her father's lineage relative, a man, said that no one had come. I asked if she would agree to go if someone came to ask for her. He answered, "There is no need for a girl to refuse if a man comes for her, no need whatsoever."

Today it was common to have an unofficial "lingana" at the marketplace arranged by the go-between. There the concerned partners could look at each other at a distance (about 10 meters). If they liked each other's looks, they could proceed to the official "lingana", and accept each other, and there would be no embarrassing refusals.

When I interviewed individuals about their marriage arrangements, I asked if the partners went through the "lingana" ceremony. Again, when the answers were compared to the place of the marriage, it was noted that people getting married in traditional villages had more likely (80%) followed this form than those living in a big city (32%). One can see a steadily decreasing number proceeding from the former point to the latter (Cramer's V 0.34) (Table 33). When the custom of "lingana" is compared to the year of marriage, one notices a steadily decreasing frequency in the observance of "lingana" starting in the 1940's (80%) and ending with the 1980's (48%) (Cramer's V 0.29, Table 34). Not surprisingly, there was no association between "lingana" and religion or sex.

After the "lingana", the couple did not see each other until their wedding ceremony, which might be several months, even years, away, depending on the bridewealth situation. A rural boy told me that the girls are so shy that they run away if their fiance tries to talk to them. However, it was commonly recognized that young people with high school education were following the white man's custom of meeting each other during the engagement. There were very few such Bira couples at Nyankunde and only one at Sezabo. Of course, in Goma, the matter was different as shown by the example of Jean, who regularly visited his sweatheart.

Table 33. The Relationship between "Lingana" Meeting and the Locality of Marriage.

| | trad. village | village | mixed village | town | small city | big city |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| no lingana | 9<br>20% | 17<br>26% | 43<br>38% | 16<br>48% | 27<br>60% | 45<br>68% |
| lingana | 37<br>80% | 49<br>74% | 69<br>62% | 17<br>52% | 18<br>40% | 21<br>32% |

(Cramer's V 0.34)

Table 34. The Relationship between "Lingana" and the Year of Marriage.

| | 1940's | 1950's | 1960's | 1970's | 1980's |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| no lingana | 10<br>20% | 12<br>27% | 15<br>28% | 55<br>56% | 66<br>52% |
| lingana | 39<br>80% | 32<br>73% | 38<br>72% | 43<br>44% | 61<br>48% |

(Cramer's V 0.29)

## Bridewealth

Among the Bira of Zaire, the vast majority (95%) of schoolchildren still think that it is good to pay bridewealth. This stands in contrast with Senegal, where 60% of the schooldchildren opposed bridewealth payments (d'Hondt and Vandewiele 1980: 240), and is different from the Swazi in South Africa where 67% of the college students stated that they would enter into a marriage involving bridewealth (Ferraro 1983:8). Among the Swazi, 80% to 85% of the marriages contracted during the 1970's involved payment of bridewealth (Ibid.:1). In Zaire, there is no association between persons' opinions about bridewealth and their gender. Instead, one can see a weak reflection of the geographical location of the children to the acceptance or non-acceptance of bridewealth. Although the majority of all children accepted the principle of bridewealth, a larger proportion of rural children (100%, 100%, 98%) did so than urban children, with Nyankunde included in the latter group (93%, 92%, 91%) (Table 35).

When the actual payments of bridewealth for unions were recorded, they had some association with the place where the union had been contracted. Larger proportions of those who had paid nothing were to be found in the more urban communities (21%, 24%, 22%) than in the rural ones (9%, 3%, 0%). Conversely, larger proportions of the rural population (100%, 97%, 91%) than the urban (78%, 76%, 79%) had paid some or all of the bridewealth (Table 36). Finally, the completion of payments was compared to the year in which the marriage occurred: In

Table 35. The Relationship between Children's Opinion about Bridewealth and their Locality.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulan-zabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| bridewealth not needed | 1<br>2% | - | - | 5<br>8% | 9<br>7% | 1<br>7% |
| bridewealth needed | 44<br>98% | 33<br>100% | 39<br>100% | 54<br>91% | 111<br>92% | 13<br>93% |

(Cramer's V 0.16)

Table 36. The Relationship of Bridewealth Payments to the Locality of the Marriage.

| | trad. village | village | mixed village | town | small city | big city |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| none paid | - | 2<br>3% | 10<br>9% | 7<br>22% | 11<br>24% | 14<br>21% |
| some or all paid | 47<br>100% | 63<br>97% | 102<br>91% | 25<br>78% | 35<br>76% | 54<br>79% |

the unions conducted in the 1940's (reported to me by the individuals themselves), 92% of the married men had completed all the bridewealth payments. The proportion decreases with the years and is the lowest for the present decade (16%). Meanwhile, the proportion of part payments and no payments goes up with the years until the present (Cramer's V 0.44, Table 37).

Some older informants recalled that, in the distant past, marriages were conducted by exchange, that is, a groom and his sister married simultanously a bride and her brother. None of these informants had seen such a marriage. Also in the distant past, bridewealth payments were made in a currency of hoes, arrows and spears. Later, goats became common, and then more recently, they were used combined with cattle. Bridewealth in livestock among the Bira today consists of three goats and three cows. This is the rule, but the reality shows more variety in the payments. When actual payments were tabulated, the results showed a relationship between the currency of the bridewealth and the place of the marriage. Animals were used most frequently as the bridewealth currency in the rural communities and the town (96%, 97%, 98%, 96%), but more money and/or alcohol were used in cities (35%, 29%) than elsewhere (Cramer's V 0.42, Table 38). This is not surprising, because one cannot raise animals in a city, especially Goma. I was told that the northern Bira (from Muzi-Pela on) had the same rule about the bridewealth as the rest of the Bira, three goats and three cows, but, some time during the colonial period, the goats had been changed into money, although the cows had been kept as the main part.

Table 37. The Relationship Between the Year of Marriage and Bridewealth Payments.

| | 1940's | 1950's | 1960's | 1970's | 1980's |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| none paid | 1 | 2 | 4 | 13 | 24 |
| | 2% | 5% | 8% | 13% | 19% |
| some paid | 3 | 4 | 13 | 60 | 84 |
| | 6% | 9% | 24% | 61% | 66% |
| all paid | 45 | 38 | 36 | 26 | 20 |
| | 92% | 86% | 68% | 26% | 16% |

(Cramer's V 0.44)

Table 38. The Currency of Bridewealth in Relation to the Place of Marriage.

| | trad. village | village | mixed village | town | small city | big city |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| animals | 45 | 60 | 99 | 24 | 25 | 36 |
| | 96% | 97% | 98% | 96% | 71% | 65% |
| money & alcohol | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 10 | 19 |
| | 4% | 3% | 2% | 4% | 29% | 35% |

(Cramer's V 0.42)

As numerous authors have noted, the change to currency for bridewealth payments creates a difference in many aspects of marital arrangements. The use of money as bridewealth results in lower prestige for the wife (Kuper 1982:110), failure to complete payments where they are made in installments (Ibid.), more abuse of children by their parents with cash bridewealth (Southall 1960:212, Kassam 1969), fathers' use of bridewealth intended for a son's marriage for their private business ventures (Ferraro 1970:107), and the reduction in the number of relatives interested in the well-being of a union (Southall: Ibid.). As Grosz-Ngate (1988:508) states, money embodies different relationships and encodes different values than marriage prestations produced locally through subsistence economy. In the following, changes in Bira relationships will be explored.

In villages, livestock was obtained with little downpayment by purchasing or receiving a chicken as a gift. Chickens were exchanged for a goat. Finally, a cow could be purchased with several goats. To obtain livestock faster, part of the harvest of a field could be exchanged for a cow between a Bira man and a Hema pastoralist. Although the Bira claimed that obtaining of bridewealth was a long and hard process, which had to be started years before the wedding, it still worked in the villages. At mission stations, the procedure was followed by some, but there were more restrictions, such as theft and a shortage of grazing and garden area. In the city of Goma, people did not have gardens, but had to buy their daily food. Wages were low, and a father could not feed his family with his wages (see Chapter Three) through the month, let alone save for his son's bridewealth. Mothers increased family income with petty trade or distilling of alcohol, but all income went to meet daily needs, and there was nothing left for bridewealth payments. When school children were asked how they would obtain the bridewealth for their marriage, the answers show an association with their locality. Proportionately more rural children (79%, 90%, 72%) referred to the fields as a source for bridewealth than Nyankunde (58%) or urban children (Muzi-Pela 43%, Goma 0%), the majority of whom referred to miscellaneous sources, such as wage work, digging gold, waiting for family help, or a vague statement "We'll look for some" (Table 39). In parents' answers, the contrast between rural and urban views was even more pronounced: More (87%, 87%, 93%) rural parents, 46% of the Nyankunde parents and fewer (25% Muzi-Pela, 0% Goma) urban parents, referred to the fields as the source of bridewealth payments (Cramer's V 0.64, Table 40).

The trend from livestock to money as the currency of bridewealth payment is common in East and South Africa except among the Swazi (Goldschmidt 1974, Ferraro 1976, 1983, Parkin 1985). The problem with money is that it inflates rather than increases in value. This contrasts with livestock, which increases on its own. Kenya and South Africa have been able to control the inflation of their money better than many other African countries, including Zaire. Furthermore, saving money is not easy for Bira: our sample adolescent in Goma, said that he could not trust anyone to save his money for bridewealth, not even his father, because it would be spent instead of saved. The Bira think money is to be used. What a contrast to a rural father who raises goats and cows for his son beginning when the latter

Table 39. Children's Views about How to Produce Bridewealth in Relation to Their Residence.

| | Sezabo | Ngbulan-zabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| fields | 34<br>79% | 26<br>90% | 26<br>72% | 22<br>58% | 46<br>43% | - |
| miscellaneous means | 9<br>21% | 3<br>10% | 10<br>28% | 16<br>42% | 60<br>57% | 11<br>100% |

(Cramer's V 0.42)

Table 40. Parents' Views about the Source of Bridewealth Payments in Relation to their Residence.

| | Sezabo | Ngulan-zabo | Gerechabo | Nyankunde | Muzi-Pela | Goma |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| fields | 13<br>87% | 13<br>87% | 13<br>93% | 11<br>46% | 6<br>25% | - |
| miscellaneous means | 2<br>13% | 2<br>13% | 1<br>7% | 13<br>54% | 18<br>75% | 10<br>100% |

(Cramer's V 0.64)

is small! This nature of money contributes to the difficulty of returning the bridewealth in case of divorce. The money would have been spent; it could not be returned. It might also have greatly reduced value because of the inflation rate. Alcoholic beverages, used as bridewealth payments in Goma, had similar, even accentuated, qualities. As the boys knew that they would have difficulty in getting their hard saved money back in case of divorce, they were not too willing to risk paying the bridewealth in the first place, although they knew that they should. It is a vicious circle. Therefore, with money, the relations in the family in terms of bridewealth payments go upside down. Of the parents, 38% told me that there was no way to produce bridewealth, which is quite a pessimistic remark. At Muzi-Pela, a middle-aged man stated that the non-payment of bridewealth is not always a sign of the inability to pay, but a sign of rebellion against the custom. It probably was also caution against dissolving marriage. A Protestant father at Nyankunde had paid his son's bridewealth completely, but the marriage had ended in divorce. Now that the son had taken another wife, the father did not want to pay everything until he was convinced that the marriage continued. So there are constraints against paying bridewealth. A man at Ngbulanzabo said that soon there will not be any bridewealth payments when conducting marriages, although he himself had paid for his two sons' brides in recent years.

There is a discrepancy between the ideal and the real regarding bridewealth payments. When the school children were asked who would help them to pay the bridewealth, they unanimously favored someone helping them. However, when actual marriages were compared, there was a relationship between the residence at the time of marriage and the answer: More grooms in the villages (94%, 89%, 74%) had help from the family than the grooms in town or cities (64%, 56%, 37%). Also, more urban men (21%, 22%, 19%) had left all the bridewealth unpaid, while none had done so in the most traditional village and only a few (3%, 10%) in other villages (Table 41). There was no relationship between religious affiliation and being helped in bridewealth. The answers of the children and the reality of the marriage arrangements show that the expectations of the youth cannot be easily met by the parents in the urban centres. It is a let-down in the parent-child relationship. As mentioned earlier, the child should demonstrate obedience to parents, and the parents should reward this by bringing the child a spouse. Today this does not always happen. This weakens the reciprocity system between the generations in adolescence, although during childhood the reciprocity is still strong.

When the school children were asked what happened if the groom did not pay any bridewealth, most (52%) children's answers were that the girl's parents would remove the girl. Almost as many said that there would be an upheaval, a court case, hard feelings, a fight or like. Four percent of the children suggested a supenatural punishment, and 3% stated rebelliously that the couple should continue to live together without payments. Rural Bira told me that the groom's father could be sued and put in prison if he had not paid his son's bridewealth. Apparently this did not happen in Goma. In this issue,

Table 41. Bridewealth Payments in Actual Marriages in Relation to the Residence.

| | Trad. village | village | mixed village | town | small city | big city |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| none paid | - | 2 | 11 | 7 | 10 | 13 |
| | | 3% | 10% | 21% | 22% | 19% |
| groom himself paid | 3 | 5 | 18 | 5 | 10 | 16 |
| | 6% | 8% | 16% | 15% | 22% | 24% |
| someone helped | 44 | 59 | 83 | 21 | 26 | 39 |
| | 94% | 89% | 74% | 64% | 56% | 57% |

(Cramer's V 0.23)

rural communities had sanctions to protect the customary law, while the urban no longer had them.

In the villages, the parents would go after their daughter if she had eloped. Occasionally, I saw a single middle aged man walking through villages where I was doing research and explaining to people that his daughter had eloped to, say, Nyankunde. He was now on his way to ask for the bridewealth, or he would bring the girl back himself. At Ngbulanzabo and at Sezabo, I knew couples whose parents took the girl away because there was no payment. It was a handy way to hurry the payments. Rural fathers were not embarrassed to put pressure on the groom's relatives.

At Nyankunde, however, the father's grip on the marriage arrangements was slipping. Rachel grew up in Marabo in her father's lineage area. She was sent to Nyankunde (five kilometers away) to help an old relative in house work when she was in her teens. A young man, belonging to a different tribe, had fallen in love with her after seeing her at the market place and told her that he wanted to marry her. She told him to go to her father for negotiations. Her father told him that he wanted three goats and three cows for her. He paid the goats-part in money. By now Rachel had borne four children (one of whom died). Her father said that he had asked her to come home and live there until her husband paid all, for it was time for the final payments. She in turn argued that she did not want to go home, because her husband provided the payments for medical care for the children better than her father, who always had difficulties in producing cash for medicare. Here we see that the traditional parent-child relationship was changing. On the other hand, there were daughters in Muzi-Pela who lived uxorilocally. They had a lover with whom they produced children, a large number of children over the years. They did not leave their childhood home because there was no bridewealth payment for them, and they kept their children for the same reason.

In Goma, Roza became pregnant when still living at home. She moved in with her boy friend. Her father was not able to negotiate the bridewealth, because he had died a few years previously. While she was pregnant, her mother said that there should be no mention of bridewealth lest it disturb the delivery. The child died before her first birthday. There was much talk among the Bira in Goma about Roza's unpaid bridewealth. The father's relative whom the mother expected to take leadership in the matter did nothing. It was not the mother's role to negotiate with her son-in-law because of the avoidance rule between them, so common in African societies. When she died, her last words were said to have been that Roza's boyfriend has not paid anyone even one drink. She left it to the other Bira to get it from him. The Bira talked much about the boyfriend, blaming him. Meanwhile, Roza and her boyfriend went on with their lives. They had two children when I left and still no bridewealth paid.

Roza's brother, Manueli had a girl friend. Her father did not want her to have anything to do with Manueli and refused to feed the girl. However, Roza offered her help, and the young couple soon rented a room for themselves. The Bira knew that her father was angry about not having received anything for his daughter, but the father never came to talk directly to Manueli. Manueli claimed that a groom does not really need to pay until they have had two children. The couple had a baby but she died. The girl's father came to the funeral, but avoided Manueli through the ceremonies. The relationship of the young couple deteriorated. Manueli started beating his girlfriend, and after a while they separated.

These examples illustrate the struggle between parental demands for traditional bridewealth and the young people's difficulties or unwillingness to produce it. Jean, whose example was given earlier, told me that he felt that his friends would not respect him if he did not pay the bridewealth for his wife.

When parents cannot help their son in bridewealth payments, they have no say in the disputes of the young couple. When Manueli was beating his wife severely at night, Bira families heard the commotion but did not intervene, because no bridewealth had been paid, and they knew that they were incapable of producing it. This contrasts with the attitude of the family toward a young couple in a village. A girl had married a boy in a different clan and was living away from her home village. However, one day she came home with her baby explaining to her parents that her husband had beaten her. The parents let her live at home again until, after a while, the young husband came to look for her. The parents told me that they acted as judges in the case. They listened to both sides, then scolded both of them, after which they encouraged them to live peacefully together. They have received the full payment for their daughter, so they have full rights to deal with any problems they might have. They also felt strongly that their daughter should represent her parents in an honorable fashion, as proof of being worth the payments. These examples show that rural couples still feel united with their lineages, not being alone in trouble. By contrast, many urban young men and women stand alone in whatever relationship they have chosen for themselves.

Another aspect of bridewealth is the receiving and sharing the wealth by the girl's family. It was customary to butcher a goat from the bridewealth of a daughter and divide it between the lineage members of the bride following strict rules. By eating the goat, the family was showering blessings on the daughter's marriage. In the questionnaire about marital arrangements, it was asked if any part of the bridewealth had been shared among the family. There was a relationship between the sharing and the place of marriage. More (100%, 88%, 86%) families in the villages shared the bridewealth, while fewer families in towns (69%) and cities (60%, 70%) did so (Table 42). Also, there was a trend for sharing to become less common with time: as expected, in the 1940's, sharing was reported to me in 98% of the families; in the 1980's it was reported in 70% of the families (Table 43). Although less than in the 1940's, the latter percentage shows that sharing is still regarded as important.

As mentioned in Chapter one, missions in the Bira area have not tried to stamp out the practice of bridewealth payments. The importance of the bridewealth to the Bira value system has been recognized by the churches. The Catholic church does not marry a couple unless both sides agree that most of the payments have been made. Because the Catholic church does not recognize a couple as legally married if they have not had a Catholic church wedding, fewer

Table 42. Sharing of the Bridewealth by the Bride's Family in Relation to the Residence.

| | trad. village | village | mixed village | town | small city | big city |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| not shared | - | 7<br>12% | 14<br>14% | 9<br>31% | 15<br>40% | 18<br>30% |
| shared | 44<br>100% | 53<br>88% | 89<br>86% | 20<br>69% | 22<br>59% | 42<br>70% |

(Cramer's V 0.32)

Table 43. Sharing of the Bridewealth by the Bride's Family in Relation to the Year of Marriage.

| | 1940's | 1950's | 1960's | 1970's | 1980's |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| not shared | 1<br>2% | 3<br>7% | 7<br>15% | 19<br>21% | 34<br>30% |
| shared | 41<br>98% | 38<br>93% | 40<br>85% | 73<br>79% | 80<br>70% |

(Cramer's V 0.25)

couples are legally married in the eyes of the church than in the eyes of the general population. The Protestant mission does not pay attention to the bridewealth payments, except that it wishes that the payments be taken care of. Some Protestants at Nyankunde told me that the elders of the church may bar a person from the full membership of the congregation at the request of the bride's father, if the groom has not paid his bridewealth. Thus the churches reinforce customary social controls. As to church weddings, the popular opinion among the Bira is that in order to be married at the church, one has to arrange an expensive wedding feast in addition to the bridewealth payments. Therefore, a traditional wedding would be less costly and more frequently used. Generally, more Protestants (59%) than Catholics (38%) have finished the payments (Table 44). There was no association with religious orientation regarding sharing of bridewealth by the bride's family.

Table 44. The State of Payment of Bridewealth in Regard to Religious Affiliation.

| | Catholic | Protestant |
|---|---|---|
| none paid | 34<br>13% | 9<br>8% |
| some paid | 123<br>48% | 38<br>33% |
| all paid | 97<br>38% | 68<br>59% |

(Cramer's V 0.20)

## The Wedding Feast and the Bride's Work for Her Parents-In-Law

As described in the beginning of this chapter, the traditional wedding feast was called "bangabonge", where the bride's girl friends from her village accompanied her to the groom's place. The celebrations lasted from one evening to the evening of the next day. The night meant intensive celebrating. I participated in one such feast at Sezabo. The bride and the groom were kept far from each other all night, until the next day. A part of the feast involved the expression of submission by the young couple toward the groom's parents and lineage members, and ultimately toward his lineage ancestors.

I asked about each marriage, if they had had the "bangabonge" celebration. In forty-six percent of all marriages, informants claimed to have followed it. More Catholics (50%) had celebrated with a "bangabonge" than Protestants (37%) (Table 45). There was a tendency for "bangabonge" to be celebrated by more families in villages (57%, 48%, 51%) than by those in towns or cities (27%, 36%, 37%) (Table 46). When asked about the church wedding, 131 of all weddings had been celebrted at church. There was no difference according to the localities where the couples had lived first. When Catholics and Protestants were compared, 37% of the Catholics and 31% of the Protestants had had a church wedding, which is not a significant difference. The traditional way - "bangabonge" - was, then, a slightly more popular way of getting married than the church wedding. I

Table 45. Traditional Wedding Celebration, "Bangabonge", in Relation to the Religious Affiliation.

| | Catholic | Protestant |
|---|---|---|
| no bangabonge | 127<br>50% | 74<br>63% |
| bangabonge | 125<br>50% | 43<br>37% |

(Cramer's V 0.12)

Table 46. The Traditional Wedding Celebration, "Bangabonge", in Relation to the Residence.

| | trad. village | village | mixed village | town | small city | big city |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| no bangabonge | 20<br>43% | 34<br>52% | 55<br>49% | 24<br>73% | 29<br>64% | 42<br>63% |
| bangabonge | 27<br>57% | 32<br>48% | 57<br>51% | 9<br>27% | 16<br>36% | 25<br>37% |

(Cramer's V 0.18)

interpret it as meaning that people respected the customary values expressed in the old feast, in which the submission of the young couple to the parents of the groom and his lineage ancestors was acted out. The Christian wedding did not convey such values.

When the wedding feast was over, there was no leisurely honeymoon for the young bride, but hard work. Some female members of the groom's lineage took the bride under their supervision and guided her in the work. The first important chore was to fetch water for the parents-in-law's bath, and for their tea. The bride was to sweep the house early in the morning and have tea and hot bath water ready before the in-laws got up. She was to cook the meals and wash the dishes. I remember my female informant at Ngbulanzabo having looked forward in the mid-1970's to the arrival of daughters-in-law. Then she would let the young ladies do everything and she would just sit and enjoy. A few years later, she had her dreams come true. In the past, the time of this service could last at least half a year to a few years. Today, it varies from a few days to a few months. When doing marriage interviews, I routinely asked the question of the length of the service time; then I realized that each person referring to the same occasion would give horrendously different times, so I did not compute them. The time of the bride's service for her parents-in-law was an expression of prolonged parental control over the young people.

Of the school children, 93% said that they would agree to do, or have their brides do, bride's service for the parents. There was no difference according to sex or locality of the person interviewed. The children's ideal is, again, traditional. When looking at the results of actual marriage arrangements, 298 (81%) of them had involved the bride's service. There was no association with religion. Instead, there was a relationship between the service and the aspect of completion of the payments: When all payments had been completed, there was more likelihood of the service (89%) than if no payments had been made (33%) (Table 47). The service was also associated with the locality of the marriage arrangments: more families (100%, 89%, 88%) in villages observed the custom while fewer families in towns and cities (64%, 78%, 57%) did so, although still more than half of the cases observed this custom (Table 48). These results make sense on the basis of what has been said above.

Traditionally, the newly married couple established residence in the groom's lineage village, close to his father's or father's father's house. Today, in towns, many couples lived neolocally or close to the groom's or, alternately, the bride's relatives, which were not traditional residences. When the first residences of the young couple were tabulated, it was clear that young couples followed the traditional rule most in traditional villages (98%) and least in a big city (35%). Neolocal residence was the most common (57%) in a big city, and uxorilocal or uxori-patrilocal residence was most common in towns (27%) (Table 49). Of course, in addition to this, there were a few cases where the couples did not move to live together, although they produced children; this was by no means traditional.

Bira repeatedly mentioned that in the past ancestors were believed to watch over the morality of the couples. As mentioned above, in a traditional wedding, this was symbolized by marking the

Table 47. The Relationship of the Bride's Service for her Parents-in-law to the Completion of the Bridewealth Payments.

| | none paid | some paid | all paid |
|---|---|---|---|
| no service | 29<br>67% | 24<br>15% | 19<br>11% |
| service | 14<br>33% | 139<br>85% | 146<br>89% |

(Cramer's V 0.44)

Table 48. The Bride's Service for her Parents-in-law and the Residence of the Couple.

| | trad. village | village | mixed village | town | small city | big city |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| no service | - | 7<br>11% | 13<br>12% | 12<br>36% | 10<br>22% | 29<br>43% |
| service | 46<br>100% | 59<br>89% | 98<br>88% | 21<br>64% | 36<br>78% | 39<br>57% |

(Cramer's V 0.36)

Table 49. The First Residence in Relation to the Couple's Relatives and the Location of the Residence in Rural-Urban Continuum.

| | trad. village | village | mixed village | town | small city | big city |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| patrilocal | 46<br>98% | 59<br>89% | 103<br>92% | 13<br>39% | 20<br>44% | 24<br>35% |
| uxorilocal or uxori-patrilocal | 1<br>2% | 3<br>5% | 4<br>4% | 9<br>27% | 10<br>22% | 5<br>7% |
| neolocal | - | 4<br>6% | 5<br>5% | 11<br>33% | 15<br>33% | 39<br>57% |

(Cramer's V 0.45)

bride's forehead with saliva of the living lineage elders. Therefore, wives did not dare to leave their husbands for fear of ancestral punishments. As the Bira have acquired Christian faith, their belief in ancestors has diminished. A Bira woman said, "Earlier we believed that the saliva of the ancestors would keep our marriages intact but now we don't believe so any more. Now we believe in God keeping our marriages". This change happened because of Christianity. It sounded as though there was continuity here but in reality there was not because there is a fundamental difference in how ancestors and God are viewed by people. Ancestors were feared, as in the description of Sakana, who made women and children shiver. God, on the other hand, is seen by the Bira as loving, understanding, and forgiving rather than punishing. God is not seen as stopping wives from leaving their husbands. He does not mind. Therefore, the change in the belief system coupled with economic changes beyond the control of the Bira contributes to the fact that separations are common among the Bira at present, a phenomenon also reported from different parts of Africa (e.g., Evans-Pritchard 1934, Goldschmidt 1974, Gray 1960).

Young boys had to be obedient to obtain a wife. However, as explained above, they sometimes decided to change their behavior once the wife was safely received and bridewealth payments completed. This happened in some villages and was a sign of new times: ancestors' wrath was no more feared as in the old days it would have been. Neither did lineage discipline have the influence that the elders wished for. Therefore, the parents were left in limbo.

In summary, many customary aspects of getting married are still an ideal, as shown by the answers of school children but in practice they are less often followed. A complex of factors causes this reduction: mixing of populations, change in bridewealth currency, availability of land for cultivation and raising animals, and changing beliefs about ancestors and God. Getting married was a matter for the corporate groups of the bride and the groom in the past. Now it is becoming an individual concern. As young people do not have skill in choosing a spouse or resources for coming up with the required bridewealth, resulting marriages are under severe stress. The parents of the young people get neither satisfaction nor give protection to the young couple as they did in the past, when it was the climax of childhood to receive a gift of a spouse from one's parents and lineage group. This reminded children of the end result of their childhood. Young men suffer by not receiving the prestige which a married man with completed bridewealth receives. Parent-child relationship suffers when the carefully built-up traditional relationship falls into pieces during adolescence.

Dahrendorf (1979) writes that life chances are a joint product of choices and social attachments made available by a particular social structure. Although social structures may limit the choices available to individuals, these social linkages and attachments of the individual make choices meaningful. Personal security, community trust, self-esteem and group morale are benefits provided by social linkages through the support, motivation, and definition for the "good" life they offer to individuals in a given society (Ibid.). LeVine and White (1986:205) write: "The improvement of life chances in a given society has often been defined as the expansion of options - freedom to choose a mate, a job, a place to live, consumer goods - without recognition of the social ties that make life - and choices - meaningful." In the case of the Bira, the urban young adults may have a freer choice of a spouse and thus a potential for better life chances than the rural adolescents have. However, other constraints prevent the proper marital arrangements through the traditional social linkages. Therefore, the freedom of the urban Bira has been gained at the cost of valued social ties and has not necessarily increased satisfaction or, in western terms, happiness.

The tables, where it was possible to follow the events from the 1940's, showed that changes have happened over time. The independent variable in most cases, however, is the location: numerous aspects of marital arrangements show that the urban centres are furthest from the various aspects of the tradition, and the rural villages follow them most closely. Often there is a gradual change according to the location of the community on the folk-urban continuum. The differences between the Catholics and the Protestants are minimal, which fits into the picture painted in Chapter Six: the application of Christianity is quite uniform accross the two denominations.

It is, then, in adolescence where the chain of tradition is breaking. Until then, Bira children universally held to the traditional attitude of reciprocity in the parent-child relationship, which included running of errands and completing chores by the children for their parents. This underlying attitude was strong in spite of some differences in the details of behavior, as shown in

Capter Seven. In adolescence, the reciprocal expectations cannot always be met in many small details of the marital arrangements; in the more urban centres, there are fewer possibilities; in the more rural villages, there are better possibilities. The most popular opinion among the school children was that the bridewealth should still be paid, but, in reality, this did not happen as commonly as the opinion would indicate, especially in urban areas. If we believe the forecast of a rural father about the dissolution of bridewealth payments in the near future, we must also expect radical changes in the parent-child relationship, starting from adolescence and increasingly radiating towards earlier childhood.

# CHAPTER NINE: CONCLUSION

This dissertation has examined the parent-child relationship under Christian influence among the Bira in modern Zaire. The discussion has shown that the changes are caused by two agents: ideology; and, more radically, urbanization; both instigated by Christian missions and colonialism. In ideology, the change happened among the Bira when the traditional supernatural world of ancestors and witchcraft was replaced by Christianity. The Bira developed their own version of Christianity, their "little" tradition in Redfieldian terms, out of the synthesis of their traditional religion and Christianity. Urbanization, which, according to Redfield, involves educational system, literacy, science, class structure, state administration, industrialization, and military and religious specialists, has been in process in Zaire since the Belgian colonial period. Both colonialism and missions were involved in the process of urbanization. Redfield links the degree of urbanization to the distance from a city. Although this study uses his folk-urban continuum as a useful means of presenting the degree of urbanization of communities, it also shows that distance is not the determining factor. LeVine and White's approach, which states that each country combines tradition and modern influences in a unique way, has also been more appropriate for this study. However, when LeVine and White deal with the problem of acculturation it is on a national level. This study deals with it on a community level, showing how each community is unique, but how each could be placed in an order of acculturation.

The two approaches, the one by Redfield and the other by LeVine and White, both modified to suit the purposes of this study, have been combined.

The study of six communities, each at a different stage of western influence, commenced with the most traditional village (Sezabo) with, however, some western medical, commercial, and religious influences, proceeding to two villages (Ngbulanzabo and Gerechabo) with more western contact, such as a Bible Institute or a coffee plantation. The Protestant mission station (Nyankunde) is more influenced by western institutions; the Catholic mission station (Muzi-Pela) is, in addition, connected to a larger population base than the Protestant station. Finally, Bira immigrants to a distant city (Goma) were examined; in this place the Bira form a tiny minority in the ocean of numerous tribes. This last place is the furthest removed from anything traditionally Bira. Examples are given of individuals and their lives. Many have lived in several localities under new circumstances, practicing new occupations which colonialism made possible. Mobility is least among the villagers and most among the urban dwellers. Although those Bira who became the subjects of this study lived in six communities, most of them carried knowledge of other communities, small and large, where they had lived sometime in their past. When moving around, they had followed local customs; and later they had adapted again to the customs of their present location.

The communities' location, then, has become a predicting factor for how one lives or behaves. It may not have anything to do with how one thinks. There was uniformity among the majority of the answers concerning ideology of religion (with differences in phraseology) or that of parent-child relationship throughout the communities. This finding is in line with the statement by LeVine and White (1986:174) that a large part of the population remains agrarian in its outlook and values, even when living in the city, and even when aware that their outlook and values do not accord with those of the modern European world. Despite the ideology, behavior towards parents and procedures in marriage arrangements were different depending on the particular community in which children and their parents lived.

The Christian transformation of the Bira has been fairly uniform under the Catholic and Protestant persuasion, although the two churches have had opposing histories in the western world. While beliefs in ancestors were important in keeping social relations meaningful and helping to control errant individuals, they were denounced by the Christian missions, with the support of the colonial powers. Witchcraft went underground with the onset of colonialism. It received new features from the mixing of population and customs; but in the church, witchcraft was not dealt with, and in formal courts witchcraft was not officially recorded. Finally, the Christian God was perceived uniformly among the Bira, as shown by questionnaires and interviews. He was adapted to the old Bira idea of a supreme being who was thought of as the creator and sustainer of life, but who was not interested in the enforcement of moral qualities. Christian attributes of God as the agent of justice, morality, and punishment were not readily grasped. The Bira do not interpret Christian doctrine through western theology. Instead the Bira interpret the Christian message through their tradition without, however, having a replacement for ancestors who were their moral guardians. The Bira version of Christianity now lacks social controls. It is a unique form of Christianity.

Like the examples of western history, economic development has been linked with the rise of Protestantism in Europe, so some economic differences between Catholic and Protestant Bira could be observed. With the support of Protestant missionaries, leading Protestant Christians were encouraged in entrepreneurial activities. However, unlike the history of European Protestantism, the Bira were not driven to work by their scrupulous conscience. Instead, the Zairean Christians operated with the same confusing sense of freedom which the population experienced during the breakdown of the feudal system and of the dependence on the Catholic church in Europe. In the case of the Bira, the sense of freedom came from the release from the control of ancestors, because these were no longer thought of as punishing.

The next topic, then, was to inquire into the effects of such a change on parent-child relationship. Formerly, ancestors were seen as an extension of parental control, especially when Sakana disciplined disobedient children; but this dimension has now been forgotten. However, the traditional reciprocity system between parents and children is still seen as valid. As God is the creator and sustainer of all people, so are the parents of their children. Although Bira often compare the two authorities to each other, they omit the differences. While parents punish recalcitrant children fiercely by beating, if seen necessary, Bira claim that God does not punish. This idea is expressed in statements like "God has empty eyes" or "God's punishment is hidden"; it is, therefore, impossible for humans to comprehend. Furthermore, the Christian idea of God's forgiveness is seen by the Bira through the traditional otiose God: if God forgives sin it means that sin does not matter to God; he continues to sustain life and people no matter what they do. The actions of the parents are, however, influenced by what their children do.

The different understanding of God and parents has not changed the relationship between young children and parents. However, it may have influenced older children's relationship to their parents. With the lack of the ancestors' interest in the behavior of a young married man, he may turn against his parents once his wife is first secured. Some adolescents have become chronic thiefs. Adolescents have stepped into an adult world which is not run by fierce ancestors, but by a flexible and forgiving Christian God. In adolescence, parents tend to surrender their roles as disciplinarians, because they come to feel powerless to enforce their wills. This situation contrasts with pre-Christian times, when people were always living under ancestors' unrelenting control which kept them in line.

Regardless of the new or traditional ideology, Bira children everywhere learn obedience, a respectful attitude towards parents and ideally towards strange adults (which latter rule may not be always followed in practice, the least towards the urban end of the continuum). Bira children accept their parents' discipline and understand it to be for their good. This is the foundation of Bira culture in all communities studied, although there are minor differences between the rural and urban children's answers concerning formal behavior towards their parents; and some modern conditions such as drunkenness may temporarily change the traditional relationship everywhere.

One might ask if parental discipline has replaced the ancestors' discipline, which is now gone, and if it serves to maintain traditional reciprocity between parents and children. However, it is difficult if not impossible to measure past and present discipline. Old written sources do not describe parental discipline, although they discuss Sakana's role in social control. When parents were asked if parents in the past were more severe than now, their answers were inconclusive. Therefore, this question must be left open.

While the young children's relationship to their parents is fairly universal in all locations, in adolescence there are differences. These can be attributed to the position of the community in the folk-urban continuum: the closer to the rural end of the continuum, the more often parents choose a spouse for their children, pay the groom's bridewealth, share it with the bride's family, arrange traditonal "lingana" and "bangabonge" feasts, receive services from the bride, have the young couple reside patrilocally, and are concerned with harmony in the young family. The closer to the urban end, the less chance there is that these practices occur, although ideally everyone would like to follow these traditions.

On one hand, Bira claim to be glad for the arrival of "civilization" in their area. On the other hand, they are aware of the changes which have happened in social controls since the traditional times. However, they do not see any causal link between the two factors. This study demonstrates that such causation exists. Although Christianity has resulted in general changes in Bira orientation toward life, the affiliation with the Catholic or Protestant church of the interviewees did not explain all the differences in the interview data. This study claims that the religious difference is more in phraseology than in actual meaning as understood by the Bira. Although Catholic and Protestant missions have emphasized their differences in the past, the Bira have adapted Christianity from both sources in a similar fashion. However, the nature of the communities, as they represent the continuum from rural to urban, from traditional life style to more modern, was found to explain these differences in most cases. In other words, where one lives affects the way one lives even when it is at odds with the ideal. As an example, this is seen in the children's idealistic emphasis on bridewealth, although behavioral pattern often showed neglect of the payments, especially in urban communities.

This study was longitudinal in half of the communities: Ngbulanzabo and Nyankunde were studied from 1974 to 1986, Goma from 1977 to 1986; the rest of the communities for one year, 1985-1986. It would be good to continue the studies. More differences between Protestants and Catholics may develop as the Christian teaching continues. Perhaps the present phraseological differences, which were found in some answers, may develop meaning beyond the phraseology for individual Christians. The great emphasis of the Protestant teaching on self-control and individual responsibility to God may become more internalized among Christians as they continue attending Christian services.

In addition to general changes, with further anthropological research it might be possible to determine the weight of each western institution in the process of culture change. This study viewed communities as a whole without trying to differentiate what impact each institution might individually have. In this way, LeVine and White's national level and the community level of this study could be broken down further to an institutional level. Now Sezabo is getting its first medical person trained by Nyankunde hospital. Ngbulanzabo may already have its first water pump in the community. An observer would learn the influence of these particular innovations. With follow-up visits to Ngbulanzabo, one could see what further effect the Bible Institute has had upon the environmental resources of the village, inter-tribal relationships, and especially the marriage patterns of the young generation. With a new generation of children in each community, it would be possible to measure whether the difference between ideal and real has narrowed. And above all, one could learn how much parents control their children, especially in marital arrangements.

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# APPENDICES

## I. QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SCHOOL CHILDREN

Your name........................ Class.............
Are you a girl or a boy?.........................
Are you Catholic or Protestant ...........................
Are you baptized? ..............
Your age? ......
You are a resident of ........................
Who lives at your home? Underline in the list those persons mentioned who live with you at home: mother, father, mother's co-wife, mother's sister, your brother, sister, grandmother, grandfather, father's sister, father's brother, mother's brother etc. (Add if needed)
.........................................................................
.........................................................................

*********

Underline the better answer, yes or no, in questions 1 - 26.
1. Do the children need to obey parents? Yes or no.
2. Do you obey your parents? Yes or no
3. Are you afraid of your parents? Yes or no
4. Are the parents afraid of their children as well? Yes or no
5. Will the parents' curse become true? Yes or no
6. Do you need to show respect to parents when they are drunk? Yes or no
7. Do you need to show respect to an adult if you do not know him or her?
8. When the parents send you on an errand, do you need to go every time? Yes or no
9. ... even if it is raining? Yes or no
10. If an adult whom you do not know tries to send you on an errand, will you go? Yes or no
11. Are you afraid of your parents' punishment? Yes or no
12. When parents make a mistake, may you scold them? Yes or no
13. May you look at your parents' eyes when you talk to them? Yes or no
14. Do the school children fear and respect their teacher? Yes or no
15. Are you afraid of the teacher's punishment? Yes or no
16. Do you need to ask for your parents' permission to go to the market? Yes or no
17. Do your parents know all the time where you are? Yes or no
18. Is it good to pay bridewealth to obtain a wife? Yes or no
19. Girls: Will you agree to serve your groom's parents when you get married?
Yes or no
Boys: When you take a wife, will you agree her to serve your parents at first?
20. Will you agree to take care of your parents when they become old and weak? Yes and no?
21. God takes care of everybody - is it true? Yes or no
22. Do you fear God? Yes or no
23. Did you go to church last Sunday? Yes or no

24. Can a person be a Christian without going to church? Yes or no
25. Does a Christian need to do good all the time? Yes or no
26. Do you fear witchcraft? Yes or no

******

Write your answer to questions 27-55.

27. Why would the children need to obey their parents?
...................................................................
...................................................................

28. Why would the children be afraid of their parents?
......................................................................
......................................................................

29. Why would parents be afraid of their children?
......................................................................
......................................................................

30. If parents curse you, what do you need to do to remove the power of the curse?
.....................................................................
.....................................................................

31. How do you show respect to your parents?
......................................................................
......................................................................

32. What chores do you do regularly to help your parents at home?
......................................................................
......................................................................

33. Yesterday what chores did you do?
......................................................................
......................................................................

34. Do you do these chores without a reminder? Yes or no
35. If you do not do the chores, what will happen?
.......................................................................
.......................................................................

36. Sometimes children do bad. Give examples of this.
......................................................................
......................................................................

37. How will the parents punish children?
.....................................................................
.....................................................................

38. What severe punishment did you receive that you can still remember? How old were you then. (What did you do to deserve it?)
......................................................................
......................................................................

39. When your parents punish you, may you talk back to them, laugh at them, or strike them? Why yes or no?
......................................................................
......................................................................

40. How does your teacher punish?
.....................................................................
.....................................................................

41. Do you want your family to find you a spouse or do you want to

look for a spouse yourself?

.........................................................................

42. Who will help you to obtain the required bridewealth?

.........................................................................

43. How will you obtain the wealth? ........................................

.........................................................................

44. Even if you don't know exactly how much bride wealth you need to pay try to estimate it

.........................................................................

.........................................................................

45. If a boy does not pay bridewealth what happens?

.........................................................................

.........................................................................

46. If a person does not follow God's word, will God forgive or punish him?

.........................................................................

47. Why should one fear God?

.........................................................................

.........................................................................

48. Who is more severe, your parents or God?

.........................................................................

49. How does God punish?

.........................................................................

.........................................................................

50. How many times a month do you go to church? ..................

51. What benefit is there in believing God?

.........................................................................

.........................................................................

52. Long ago the Bira believed in "bagili". What were they? What did they do? Tell us if you know.

.........................................................................

.........................................................................

53. It is known that a person may cast a spell on another one. For instance, who could cast a spell on you: must it be a member of your family or could it be an outsider? ..................

Could a child of your age bewitch you or must it be an older person?

.........................................................................

54. How many times has some one cast a spell on you? .........

55. Write an example how some one cast a spell on you. Who did it? Why? How did you recover?.............................................................

.........................................................................

.........................................................................

.........................................................................

.........................................................................

.........................................................

## Questionnaire in Swahili

Jina lako
Weye ni musika (binti) ao kijana (mwanaume)?
Weye ni catholique ao protestant?
Unaisha kubatizwa?
Una miaka mingapi?
Unakaa kijiji gani ao ville gani?
Ku nyumba yako ni nani? Tia kisitari chini ya jina la mutu ambaye anakaa ndani ya nyumba yenu katika majina ifuatayo: mama, baba, mbanda ya mama, mama mudogo, dada, kaka, tata mwanamuke, tata mwanaume, sangazi, baba mudogo, muyomba na kadhalika (ongeza jina ingine kama unahitaji)
Tia kisitari chini ya jibu nzuri, ndiyo ao hapana, maulizo 1 - 26
1. Watoto wanahitaji kutii wazazi wao? ndiyo ao hapana
2. Weye unatii wazazi wako? ndiyo ao hapana
3. Unaogopa wazazi wako? ndiyo ao hapana
4. Wazazi wanaweza kuogopa watoto wao vilevile? ndiyo ao hapana
5. Kulapa (kulaani) ya wazazi inakamata kweli? ndiyo ao hapana
6. Unahitaji kuonyesha heshima kwa baba na mama wanalewa pombe? ndiyo ao hapana
7. Unahitaji kuonyesha heshima kwa mutu mukubwa kama humufahamu? ndiyo ao hapana
8. Kama wazazi wanakutuma, unahitaji kwenda kila mara? ndiyo ao hapana
9. Hata mvua inanyesha? ndiyo ao hapana
10. Kama mutu mukubwa humufahamu anapima kukutuma, unaweza kwenda vilevile? ndiyo ao hapana
11. Unaogopa malipizi ya wazazi? ndiyo ao hapana
12. Kama wazazi wanafanya kosa, watoto wanaweza kuwakaripia (kuwahamakia)? ndiyo ao hapana
13. Unaweza kuangalia macho ya wazazi kama unazungumuza nao? ndiyo ao hapana
14. Watoto wanafunzi wanahitaji kuogopa na kuheshimu mwalimu wao? ndiyo ao hapana
15. Unaogopa malipizi ya mwalimu? ndiyo ao hapana
16. Unahitaji kulomba ruhusa ya wazazi kwa kwenda ku soko? ndiyo ao hapana
17. Wazazi wanajua fasi uko saa yote? ndiyo ao hapana
18. Ni vema kulipa mali kwa kupata bibi? ndiyo ao hapana
19. Musika (binti): Utaitika kutumikia wazazi wa bwana wako wakati wa kuolewa?
ndiyo ao hapana

Mwanaume: Kama utakamata bibi, ni vema atumikie wazazi wako kwanza?
20. Unaitika kuchunga wazazi wako kama wanaisha kuwa wazee na wazaifu? ndiyo ao hapana
21. Mungu anachunga watu wote - ni kweli? ndiyo ao hapana
22. Unaogopa Mungu? ndiyo ao hapana
23. Ulienda ku kanisa ~~siku ya~~ Mungu iliyopita? ndiyo ao hapana
Mutu anaweza kuwa Mukristo bila kwenda ku kanisa? ndiyo ao hapana
25. Mukristo anahitaji kufanya vitu vema saa yote? ndiyo ao hapana

26. Unaogopa ulozi? ndiyo ao hapana

Andika jibu yako kwa maulizo 27-55.
27. Watoto wanahitaji kutii wazazi wao kwa sababu gani?
28. Watoto wanaweza kuogopa wazazi wao kwa sababu gani?
29. Wazazi wanaweza kuogopa watoto wao kwa sababu gani?
30. Kama wazazi wanakulapa (wanakulaani), unahitaji kufanya nini hata wanatosha lapa lao (ile laana)?
31. Unaonyesha heshima kwa wazazi wako namna gani?
32. Unafanya kazi gani kwa nyumba yako kwa kusaidia wazazi kila siku?
33. Jana ulifanya kazi gani kuwasaidia?
34. Unafanya hio kazi bila kukumbushwa? ndiyo ao hapana
35. Kama haufanyi hio kazi, kitu gani kinatokea?
36. Watoto wanafanya kosa mara kwa mara. Andika mifano.
37. Wazazi wanaleta malipizi gani kwa makosa?
38. Malipizi gani ni makali zaidi ulipata na ungali unakumbuka? Ulikuwa na miaka mingapi kama uliyopata? (Ulifanya nini?)
39. Kama wazazi wanaleta malipizi, unaweza kujibu, kuwapiga ao kuwacheka? Kwa sababu gani ndiyo ao hapana?
40. Mwalimu analeta malipizi gani?
41. Unataka mutu ya jamaa kukutafutia muchumba (fiance) ao utajitafutia weye mwenyewe?
42. Nani atakusaidia kupata mali kulipa kwa bibi wako?
43. Mutapata mali namna gani?
44. Hata hujui bado unahitaji kupewa ngapi kwa kupata bibi, pima kusema unahitaji kupewa karibu ngapi?
45. Kama mwanaume hapewi mali kwa kupata bibi, kitu gani kinatokea?
46. Kama mutu hafuati neno la Mungu, Mungu atamusamehe ao ataleta malipizi?
47. Juu ya nini mutu anaweza kuogopa Mungu?
48. Nani ni mukali zaidi: wazazi wako ao Mungu?
49. Mungu anaweza kuleta malipizi gani?
50. Unaenda ku kanisa mara ngapi kwa mwezi moja?
51. Faida ya kuamini Mungu ni nini?
52. Zamani Wabira walikuwa na "bagili". Unajua bagili walikuwa kitu gani? Walifanya nini? Eleza kama unajua?
53. Tunajua ya kwamba mutu anaweza kuloga mutu mwingine. Kwa mufano, nani anaweza kukuloga, unafikili anaweza kuwa mutu ya jamaa ao anaweza kuwa mutu wa inje ya jamaa?
Mutoto wa kipimo chako anaweza kukuloga ao anapashwa kuwa mukubwa kuliko weye?
54. Mara ngapi uliisha kulogewa?
55. Eleza mufano moja namna gani uliisha kulogewa? Nani alikuloga? Kwa sababu gani? Ulipona namna gani?

## II. INTERVIEW FOR PARENTS

### Supervision

1. Where are your children now?
2. How do you know if your children really go to school during the school hours? Have they ever been found cheating, for instance gone to play instead of school?
3. How quickly do the children come home after school?
4. Are you sure that your child is not misbehaving for instance on the road to school or to the market?
5. Do your children need to ask for your permission to go to the market, to the fields, to go to the friends, to go to the neighbors, to a different neighborhood, to a different village?
6. Is God watching your children and guarding them all the time?
7. If a person does not follow God's word, will God forgive him or punish him?

### Obedience

8. What chores do your children need to do regularly?
9. Do they do them truly regularly or do they neglect sometimes? Do you need to remind them?
10. Must a child go if he is sent on an errand? What if it is raining?
11. Will your child go if an unknown adult tries to send a child?
12. You told me about the chores your children do. Will you sometimes be merciful and let children rest instead of working?
13. Will God be merciful to a bad child?
14. What benefit do the parents get from their children?
15. Why should children obey their parents?

### Respect

16. If parents make a mistake, may the children scold them?
17. Do the children need to curtesy to you when they hand something to you? May a child look at your eyes when you talk to him/her?
18. Why would children be afraid of their parents?
19. Can the parents be afraid of their children as well? Why?
20. When a parent punishes a child, may he/she talk back to a parent, laugh at him or strike him?
21. Have your children stolen from you?
22. When your food is ready to be served, who eats with whom?
23. If a child strikes his parent, will God punish him? Will the ancestors also punish? How?
24. Should a child show respect to parents even if they are drunk?
25. Should a child show respect to an adult whom he does not know?

### Discipline

26. May Christian parents punish their children? How about a neighbor?
27. What punishments do you give your children?
28. What bad do your children do?

29. Give an example of a punishment during the past week (last month, this year, last year, whenever).
30. Should parents curse their children? Will it come true? How to remove the curse?
31. Do the ancestor spirits still bring punishments?
32. Do you fear God. Why? Are you afraid of God's punishment?
33. Who is more severe: a parent or God? Why?
34. Were the parents in the old days more severe than parents of today?

## Marital arrangements

35. Would you like a member of the family to find a spouse to your child or would you like your child to find one himself?
36. How will you obtain the required bridewealth ?

## Witchcraft, religion

37. Who can cast a spell on you: a member of your family or an outsider?
(39. How did ancestors punish. Do they still punish?)
43. What is the benefit of believing in God?
44. Did you go to church last Sunday? How many times a month do you go?
45. Can a person be a Christian without going to church?
46. Does a Christian need to do good all the time? If he occasionally forgets to do good, will God forgive?

## Interview in Swahili

1. Watoto wako ni wapi sasa?
2. Watoto wako wanaenda ku darasa kweli? Unajua namna gani?
3. Watoto wako wanafanya nini nyuma ya darasa?
4. Mutoto yako hawezi kutembea ovyo ovyoku soko, ku njia. Unajua namna gani?
5. Watoto wanahitaji kulomba ruhuza kwa kwenda ku soko? Kwa shamba? Kwa kucheza na rafiki? Kwa kwenda ku jirani? Kwa nyumba ya mbali, Kwa kijiji ingine?
6. Mungu anaangalia watoto wako kila siku saa yote? Anawachunga?
7. Kama mutu hafuati neno la Mungu, Mungu atamusamehe ao ataleta malipizi?

8. Watoto wako wanahitaji kufanya kazi gani kwa kila siku?
9. Watafanya kweli ao wanaacha mara na mara?
   Wanafanya bila kukumbusha?
10. Mutoto anahitaji kwenda kama unamutuma?
    Hata mvua inanyesha?
11. Hata mutu mukubwa mutoto hafahamu anapima kutuma mutoto, anaweza kwenda vilevile?
12. Unaweza hurumia mutoto mara na mara? Saa gani?
13. Mungu anaweza kuhurumia mutoto mubaya?
14. Faida ya mutoto kwa wazazi ni nini?
15. Watoto wanahitaji kutii wazazi kwa sababu gani?

16. Kama wazazi wanafanya kosa, watoto wanaweza kuwahamakia kweli?
17. Watoto wanapiga magoti kweli wakati ya kuleta maji kwa watu wakubwa? Kuangalia ku macho ya watu wakubwa wakati ya kuzungumuza nao?
18. Watoto wanaogopa wazazi wao? Kwa nini?
19. Wazazi wanaweza kuogopa watoto vilevile? Kwa nini?
20. Kama mama/baba analeta malipizi kwa mutoto, mutoto anaweza kujibu, kupiga ao kucheka muzazi?
21. Watoto wanaiba ku wazazi wao?
22. Watoto wanaweza kula mbele ya watu wakubwa?
23. Kama mutoto anapiga wazazi, Mungu ataleta malipizi? Bagili vilevile? Nini?
24. Mutoto anahitaji kuonyesha heshima kwa wazazi wanalewa pombe?
25. Mutoto anahitaji kuonyesha heshima kwa mutu mukubwa, hata hawezi kumufahamu?

26. Wazazi Wakristo wanaweza kuleta malipizi kwa watoto? Jirani anaweza vilevile?
27. Malipizi gani kwa kosa ya watoto?
28. Kosa kubwa? Kosa kidogo? Leta mufano.
29. Posho hii? Posho ya mbele? Mwezi huu? Mwezi ya mbele?
30. Wazazi wanaweza kulapisha mutoto? Kwa nini? Inakamata kweli? Wanasema nini? Namna gani kutosha lapa?
31. Bagili bangali banaleta malipizi?
32. Unaogopa Mungu? Juu ya nini? Unaogopa malipizi ya Mungu?
33. Nani ni makali kupita: wazazi ao Mungu?
34. Zamani wazazi walikuwa makali kupita sasa? Mufano?

35. Unafurahi mutu ya jamaa kutafuta bibi/bwana kwa mutoto yako ao yeye mwenyewe ajitafutie?
36. Mutapata (mulipata) "mali" namna gani kwa kupewa bibi ya mutoto yenu?
37. Ulozi: Nani anaweza kuloga: mutu ya jamaa ao mutu ya inje?
(39. Bagili balileta malipizi kwa kosa gani? Sasa angali wanaleta malipizi?)
43. Faida ya kuamini Mungu ni nini?
44. Ulienda ku kanisa siku ya Mungu iliyepita? Unaenda mara ngapi kwa mwezi?
45. Mutu anaweza kuwa Mukristo bila kwenda ku kanisa?
46. Mukristo anahitaji kufanya vitu vema saa yote? Kama hafanyi, Mungu atamusamehe?

## III. QUESTIONS ABOUT MARRIAGE ARRANGEMENTS

1. What year did the bride enter the groom's home?
   Where is the spouse from?
   How much bridewealth was paid before she entered the house?
   How much is left to pay?
   Who helped the groom to obtain the wealth for the payment?

2. Who found the girl for the boy?
3. Was there a traditional formal meeting ("Lingana") between the bride and the groom?
4. Had either partner had a formal meeting with someone else before this occasion?
5. Was there a church wedding?
6. Was there the traditional feast when the girl entered the groom's house.
7. Did the bride serve the groom's family as is the tradition? Whom did she serve and how long?
8. Who received the bridewealth?
9. Where was the young couple's residence after the service time? Where is it now?

### In Swahili

1. Mwaka gani musika aliingia ku nyumba ya bwana?
   Ni mutu ya wapi?
   Walilipa mali ngapi mbele ya kuingia?
   Inabakia ngapi kulipa?
   Nani alisaidia kijana kwa kutayarisha mali?

2. Nani alitafuta musika kwa kijana?
3. Walifanya "lingana"?
4. Musika/kijana aliisha kufanya "lingana" na mutu ingine mbele?
5. Walifanya "mariage".
6. Walifanya "bangabonge"?
7. Alifanya "ugoli"? Kwa nani? Siku ngapi?
8. Nani alipokea mali?
9. Nyuma ya "ugoli" walianza kukaa wapi? Sasa wanakaa wapi?

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